



photo: L. Oliver

## *Hibbertia obtusifolia*



photo: J. Overreem

*Hibbertia obtusifolia* is a small, much branched erect shrub, to 60 cm tall [6, 10]. The young stems and leaves are scattered with star-shaped or very short and crisp hairs [10], the stems usually becoming hairless with age [6].

*Hibbertias* are commonly known as Guinea Flowers. This refers to the yellow flower colour that is said to resemble the British guinea coin [8].

*H. obtusifolia* common names include Grey Guinea-flower [10], Showy Guinea-flower [11] and Hoary Guinea-flower [3].

Population map: [www.ala.org.au/explore/species-maps/](http://www.ala.org.au/explore/species-maps/)

### Natural Populations

*Hibbertia obtusifolia* is found in NSW, Qld and Vic. [6], while in Tasmania this species has only been recorded once in 1892 [10]. It is found mainly on shallow, stony or gravelly soils on hillsides and low ridges, in open forests [2, 6, 12] usually in filtered sun in a variety of plant communities [2, 7, 11].

There is great variation in the species and it is likely *H. obtusifolia* will be subjected to botanical revision in the future [8].

## Flowering and Seeds

The pale to mid yellow flowers are usually found from spring to summer [6, 11, 12]. Bees are the most likely pollination vector for this species [10]. The fruit is a dry capsule, which opens along the top [2].

Seed collection is often difficult, time consuming and generally only a few viable seeds are produced [3] due to poor pollination and consumption by insects [7]. Seed drops quickly in hot weather and is often predated by insects, which bore minute holes and are hard to detect [3]. Collect fruits in late November to mid-March before they split [1,7]. Dry in a paper bag and seeds will be released [1].

Seed may only maintain reasonable viability for 1-2 years [4]. Viable seeds are dark and enclosed by a pulpy aril [3, 4]. Non-viable seeds are lighter in colour, weigh less and the aril is brittle [4]. Seed has a 1-3 month dormancy period [2].

This species shows great variability [1], so it is best to collect from a relatively local range, if source populations of greater than 100 plants are available. If growing from cuttings, collect cuttings from a large number of parent plants not all from the same small group of plants.

## Cultivation and Uses

*H. obtusifolia* is difficult to propagate from seed due to dormancy [7]. The seed dormancy appears to be caused by a combination of the seed coat and embryo immaturity. Removal of the seed coat is necessary for most *Hibbertia* species, however, the effect that embryo immaturities have varies between species [4]. Smoke treatment improves germination but results are still poor [4].

Fox et. al. [5] suggest (for *H. miniata*) baking the seed in the sun over summer, and reported better germination in the second autumn after sowing. Germination occurred after 28 days. Average seed viability was initially 4% and then 50% after one year [5].

Propagation of *H. obtusifolia* is usually by softwood or semi-hardwood cuttings [2, 3, 7].

*H. obtusifolia* is an attractive garden shrub [1] and an excellent ornamental for containers and rockeries [7]. It requires well-drained soil, and can tolerate dry shady sites under trees and moderate frost once established [9]. It regenerates from

suckers and seed [7].

The commonly available prostrate form with dark green leaves comes from NSW and may be a different species [12].

The flowers provide food for many native insects including moths, butterflies, wasps and bees and the seeds are food for various insects [12].

*H. obtusifolia* is likely to be susceptible to the exotic soil-borne plant pathogen *Phytophthora cinnamomi* [10].

*H. obtusifolia* is unpalatable to stock and survives in grazed remnants [8].



photo: J. Overeem

To source seeds or plants:  
[www.grassywoodlands.org.au](http://www.grassywoodlands.org.au)

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## References

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- [1] Carr, D. (1997). *Plants in Your Pants: a pocket guide for the identification and use of the common plants of the northwest slopes*. Greening Australia NSW, Armidale.
- [2] Walker, K., Burrows, G., and McMahon, L. (2001). *Bidgee Bush, An identification guide to common native plants species of the South Western Slopes of New South Wales*. Greening Australia, South West Slopes.
- [3] Ralph, M. (1993). *Seed Collection of Australian Native Plants For Revegetation, Tree Planting and Direct Seeding*. 2nd ed. Fitzroy, Victoria: Bushland Horticulture.
- [4] Ralph, M. (1997). *Growing Australian Native Plants from Seed For Revegetation, Tree Planting and Direct Seeding*. Fitzroy, Victoria: Murray Ralph/Bushland Horticulture.
- [5] Fox, J., Dixon, B. & Monk, D. (1987). *Germination of Australian Native Plant Seed*. Langkamp, P. (Ed.), Melbourne: Inkata Press.

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## Internet links

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- [6] PlantNET National Herbarium of New South Wales: <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=s&p&name=Hibbertia~obtusifolia>
- [7] Charles Sturt University's Virtual Herbarium: [http://www.csu.edu.au/herbarium/hibbobt\\_u\\_sws.html](http://www.csu.edu.au/herbarium/hibbobt_u_sws.html)
- [8] A View from Yallaroo, plants description: [http://www.yallaroo.com.au/Hibbertia\\_obtusifolia.htm](http://www.yallaroo.com.au/Hibbertia_obtusifolia.htm)
- [9] Australian Wholesale Nursery: [http://www.bushlandflora.com.au/individual\\_plant.php?p=Hibbertia%20obtusifolia%20prostrate%20form&uid=1504](http://www.bushlandflora.com.au/individual_plant.php?p=Hibbertia%20obtusifolia%20prostrate%20form&uid=1504)
- [10] Tasmanian Department of Primary Industry: [http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter/nsf/Attachments/LJEM-75H4SN/\\$FILE/Hibbertia\\_obtusifolia.pdf](http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter/nsf/Attachments/LJEM-75H4SN/$FILE/Hibbertia_obtusifolia.pdf)
- [11] The University of Melbourne, Faculty of Science, School of Botany. Plant description: [http://www.botany.unimelb.edu.au/buffalo/Hibbertia\\_obtusifolia.htm](http://www.botany.unimelb.edu.au/buffalo/Hibbertia_obtusifolia.htm)
- [12] Yarra Ranges Local Plant Directory: [http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Residents/Yarra\\_Ranges\\_Plant\\_Directory/Lower\\_Storey/Shrubs\\_to\\_2m/Hibbertia\\_obtusifolia](http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Residents/Yarra_Ranges_Plant_Directory/Lower_Storey/Shrubs_to_2m/Hibbertia_obtusifolia)