

## PHRYMACEAE – A new botanical family for our district ... *Margaret MacDonald*

As explained in the orchid article in the ANGAIR March Newsletter, the taxonomy that ANGAIR has previously adopted in our indigenous plant list has followed Walsh & Stajsic *A Census of the Vascular Plants of Victoria* 8<sup>th</sup> edn. National Herbarium of Victoria, Royal Botanic Gardens, 2007. The recently released (2014) *VicFlora* is the definitive online resource to the plants, fungi and algae of Victoria, and replaces this Census document. See <http://data.rbg.gov.au/vicflora/>

*VicFlora* has identified a few name changes for our indigenous species, which we will gradually become familiar with. One of these changes is the introduction of a new botanical family for our district – Phrymaceae. New research of phylogenetic relationships has revealed that two of our species, *Mazus pumilio* Swamp Mazus and *Mimulus repens* (now *Thyridia repens*) Monkey Flower, that have traditionally been included in the figwort family Scrophulariaceae, are actually more closely related to the lopseed family Phrymaceae.

Plants in the Phrymaceae family have some of the following characteristics:-

- They are often aquatic perennial herbs
- The flowers have both pollen-bearing stamens and ovule bearing (style & stigma) parts.
- The flowers are zygomorphic (if cut in the middle the two halves are mirror images).
- The 5 sepals are fused at the base into a tube.
- The 5 petals are also fused at the base and are 2-lipped. The upper lip is two lobed; the lower lip is 3-lobed.
- There are 4 stamens arranged in pairs, and a long style with a 2-lobed stigma.
- The fruit is a capsule.



Monkey Flower

The single mauve flowers with their downy yellow centres usually appear from spring to autumn. It is found in swampy sites, often on margins of water or saltmarshes.



Swamp Mazus

The slender flower stems bear pale mauve flowers with a white throat above the rosettes of leaves. It also flowers from spring to autumn and is found on margins of swamps.

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