

DAISY-BUSHES IN OUR AREA – DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

...*Bill McKellar...Drawings by Kaye Traynor*

The Daisy family, Family Asteraceae (or Compositae as it was called), is the largest of the plant families, with 23,000 species world-wide, of which we have at least 75 in this region. It includes important economic plants like lettuce, globe artichokes and pyrethrum.

The attractive flowers are composite, i.e. made up of a collection of florets, packed together within an outer ring of bracts. Each fertile floret produces a single seed, called a cypsela or achene. These are light, most having a hairy end, which is called a pappus, the hairs of which form a parachute to allow wind dispersal. The seed shapes are beautiful, and differ from one species to the next. The differences are used to identify each genus.

Here are some examples.

Olearia – Named after German botanist Adam Olearius

Olearia is the most numerous genus in the Asteraceae family, and its members have woody stems and branches. We have eight species in this region. The Musk Daisy-bush *Olearia argophylla* is the largest of all, growing to 7 m tall.

In the Olearias, the florets are usually yellow, with white bracts. The leaves are obvious and attractive, often large and hairy, with silver underneath. The cypselas are well formed with an obvious pappus.

The cypsela shown is the Velvet Daisy-bush *Olearia pannosa*. This rare and vulnerable plant is found along Pt Addis Road. Its seed, which is the largest in the genus, is about 0.5 cm long, and subject to insect attack, as noted in this month's Propagating Group Report



Velvet Daisy-bush X10



Musk Daisy-bush*

Ozothamnus *Ozo=branch thamnus =shrub*

These are medium shrubs, often growing in coastal areas. The composite flower heads are open and terminal, with florets surrounded by spoon-shaped bracts. Their cypselas have a dense but short pappus. There are 5 species in our region.

The example here is Rosemary Everlasting *Ozothamnus rosmarinifolius*. This medium-sized plant, which looks like English rosemary, is found in wet areas and along the coast.



Cut-leaf Daisy X20

Brachyscombe (or *Brachycombe*) *Brach=short, combe=hairs* (referring to the pappus).

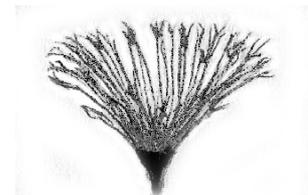
These are perennial herbs with solitary flower heads. The florets are yellow, with bracts varying from white to mauve. The cypselas have either very short or absent pappus. Our area has 5 examples.

The example shown is Cut-leaf Daisy *Brachyscombe multifida* (many cuts or clefts). Those who came to the Cranbourne gardens saw many varieties of this attractive plant. The bracts are usually shades of mauve, and florets are yellow. Some varieties are sterile.

Podolepis *Podos=foot lepis= scale*

These annual or perennial herbs have yellow bracts and florets, and the inner bracts are claw-like, giving the species its name. The florets are bisexual, and their cypselas have a large pappus.

The seed example is Showy Podolepis, *Podolepis jaceoides*, the only *Podolepis* species in the region. Its pappus is very fine, so the cypsela can blow away very easily. Watch out in a drafty potting shed.



Rosemary Everlasting X10



Showy Podolepis X5

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