

# Peppy Plants April 2014

by Eleanor Bennett

Around the Wave Walk Car Park there are several planted Western Australian coastal species. This month *Grevillea olivacea* is chosen (see also [Grevillea olivacea](#)). The genus *Grevillea* commemorates Charles Francis Greville (1749-1809) who was one of the founders of the Horticultural Society and *olivacea* from the Latin *oliva* an olive tree as the leaf colour is thought to resemble the leaves of the Olive Tree. It is restricted to a narrow coastal limestone strip from Jurien Bay to near Geraldton where it is listed as a Priority 4 flora because of this restricted distribution. Now it is commonly planted in gardens as it tolerates a wide range of conditions, especially in the harsh sea side conditions. It produces masses of flowers mainly in winter. It is a member of the Banksia family and as such does not have a distinct calyx and corolla, instead the flowers have a perianth. The perianth is divided into 4 parts and the stamens are enclosed in the cup-shaped upper section of each part. It is a dense shrub up to 4m tall with leaves 3-6cm long and up to 1.5cm wide. The simple leaves are leathery, the upper surface matures without hairs but the lower surface is white-silky hairy with a prominent midrib. The inflorescence is erect, stalkless or with a short stalk, up to 3cm long and 4cm wide with all the flowers appearing arise at the same point. The flowers are bright red, orange or yellow on the inside with a white hairy covering on the outside. The prominent style is red to yellow with a yellow tip. The fruits are up to 1.5cm long often rough or glandular. It can be propagated from seeds or cuttings.



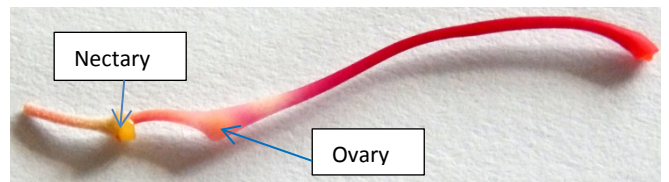
*Grevillea olivacea* is a shrub with dense leaves. In this photograph the hairless upper surface of the leaves and the hairy under surface can be readily distinguished.



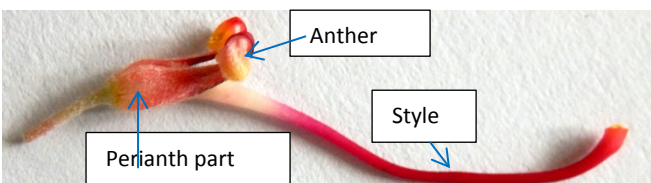
The flowers are bright red on the inner surface but covered with fine hairs on the outer surface. They arise at approximately the same level on a short stalk.



This photograph illustrates the white silky lower surface with obvious veining. Also note the angular white hairy branchlets.



In this photograph the perianth has been removed. The ovary is on a short stalk and the yellow structure at the end of the flower stalk is the nectary. The nectary produces the nectar which attracts the pollinators, typically birds, to the flowers.



Each flower consists of 4 perianth parts (only 2 visible) with a long red style. The anthers are enclosed in the cup-shaped end of each perianth part