

# Peppy Plants October 2014

by Eleanor Bennett

*Parietaria debilis* commonly called Pellitory is an annual herb up to 40cm tall, and is relatively common in the sandy soils around Peppy Beach (see also [Parietaria debilis](#)). It occurs in all Australian states. *Parietaria* is derived from the Latin *paries*, meaning a wall, as many species grow on old walls, and *debilis* is derived from the Latin meaning feeble, possibly in reference to the way the plants quickly droop if disturbed. The leaves are scattered, egg-shaped up to 5.5cm long and 3cm wide, prominently 3-veined at the base. The leaves are stalked with the stalks as long as or longer than the leaf blade. The inflorescence occurs in the axils of the leaves and consists of green to white clusters of unisexual and bisexual flowers. The flowers have no petals, only sepals which are surrounded by green bracts.



It is typical to see many of these plants growing together and forming a dense mass. The leaf stalks are typically red or pink in colour.



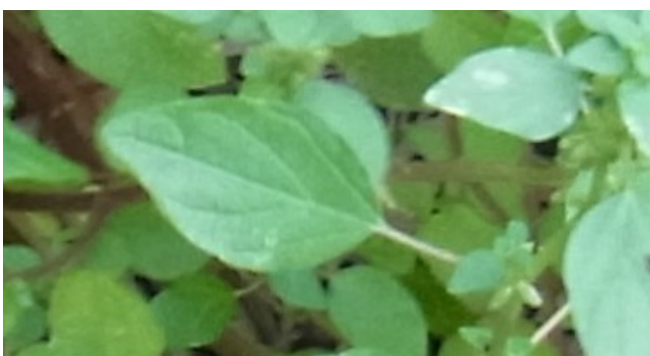
The inflorescence is a cluster of flowers in the axil of the leaves. The white lobes of the calyx are obvious on some of the flowers. It is difficult to indicate which are male and female flowers in this photograph but the male flowers have stamens, the female have a stigma and the bisexual flowers have anthers and a stigma.



The glandular hairs obvious here on a bract are characteristic for this family.



The developing fruit is enclosed in the enlarged calyx tube.



The leaves are simple with 3 distinct veins joined at the base. The stalk is as long as and may exceed the leaf blade in length.

*Parietaria debilis* can be readily overlooked in the home garden and bushland as it resembles some of the herbaceous weeds. Care should be taken not to remove these plants in error.