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Anthocercis littorea Labill.

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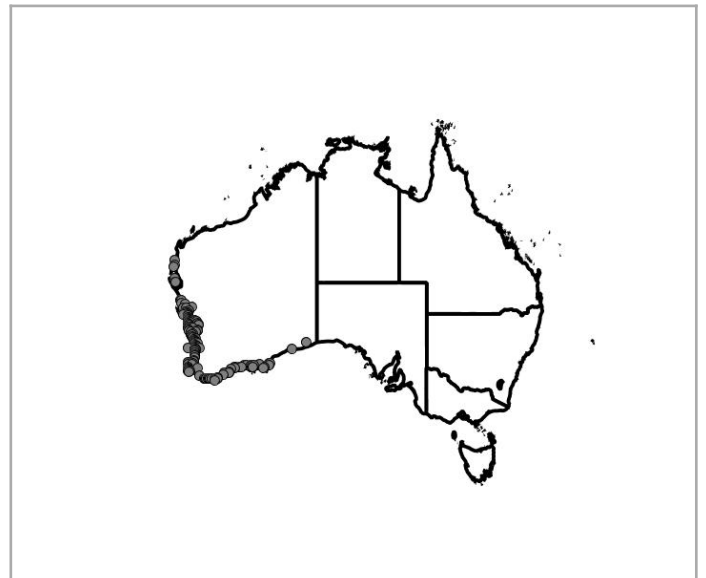
***Anthocercis littorea* Labill.**

- Purdie, R.W., Symon, D.E. & Haegi, L. in George, A.S. (ed.) (1982), Solanaceae. *Flora of Australia* 29

L. Haegi, R.W. Purdie

Erect, rarely sprawling, shrub to 3 m high, much-branched from base, ± leafy throughout, the upper lateral branches often overtopping the central axis. Branches green, soon becoming pale brown but remaining smooth except for furrows on each side of and below each node (sometimes prickly in seedlings), glabrous. Leaves borne singly, sessile to subsessile; lamina usually obovate to narrowly so, sometimes spatulate, mostly with rounded to bluntly acute, rarely apiculate apex and with flat, entire margin (dentate in seedlings), (18–) 20–50 (–65) mm long, (4–) 7–20 (–31) mm wide, usually thick and fleshy, glabrous or sometimes with scattered minute glandular hairs on upper side. Flowers in thyse-like, elongate, often leafy terminal aggregations of cymes, the flowering region often occupying most of the distal branches of the plant, each pedicel subtended by a pair of bracts; bracts 1.0–2.5 mm long; pedicels 2.5–7.5 mm long. Calyx 4–7.5 mm long. Corolla (14–) 17–28 (–32) mm long, yellow or pale yellow, the striations brown, purple-brown or maroon; tube rim lacking a corona; lobes spreading to inclined, linear, (9.5–) 11–20 (–25) mm long, 2–4 mm wide, lacking a tuft of hairs at the apex; margins flat to recurved. Stamens: longer pair 4–8 mm long, shorter pair 3–6.5 mm long. Capsule narrowly ovoid to narrowly ovoid-ellipsoid, acute to acuminate or apiculate, 9–19 mm long. Seeds 12–116 in all (few or none in the frequent galled fruits), 1.5–1.9 mm long.

Distribution: Endemic in southwestern Western Australia, along the southern and western coasts, from Israelite Bay in the east, extending north almost to Carnarvon; mostly within 1 km of the coast, but occasionally extending up to 100 km inland.



Etymology: From the Latin *littoreus* (pertaining to the seashore), in reference to the coastal situation in which this species was first found (and where most populations are now known to occur).

Common Name: Yellow Tailflower, Coastal Ray-flower.

Diagnostic Features: Similar to and easily confused with *Anthocercis ilicifolia* with which it is sympatric at several sites on the west coast. *Anthocercis littorea* is distinguished by its much-branched habit, generally more compact leafy inflorescence, and flowers with shorter, narrower corolla tubes and relatively narrower corolla lobes (l: w mostly 4.3–7.0, cf. 2.5–3.7 in *A. ilicifolia*). These characteristics are not always readily apparent on herbarium specimens. Many references to *A. littorea* in the literature relate to both species, or, sometimes, just *A. ilicifolia*. For example, the excellent line drawing on page 175 labelled *A. littorea* in Gardner & Bennetts (1956) is in fact of *A. ilicifolia* subsp. *ilicifolia*. Likewise, the line illustration on page 608 in Blackall & Grieve (1974) is also of this taxon, while the photograph at plate 1 is correctly labelled *A. littorea*.

Phenology: Flowers and fruits throughout the year but mainly August–October.

Biostatus: Native.

Habitat: Grows most commonly in coastal shrubland communities on calcareous sand dunes and occasionally on calcareous sandplain; usually a relatively short-lived colonising species common after fire or disturbance but sometimes a component of climax shrubland dominated by species of genera such as *Acacia*, *Melaleuca*, *Agonis* and *Olearia*.

Ecology: The nectar-foraging European Honey Bee *Apis mellifera* (but not native bees) has been observed on the yellow flowers of *A. littorea* (Wills *et al.* 1990: 172).

Representative Herbarium Specimens: W.A.: Quobba to Gnarloo Road, [c. 80 km NNW of Carnarvon], G.J. Keighery 15010 (PERTH); Geraldton, R. Coveny 3041 (NSW, PERTH); c. 3 km NE of Esperance, L. Haegi 1245 (AD, BRI, CANB, F, PERTH); c. 13 km W of Denmark, 13 Sept. 1963, J.H. Willis (MEL).

Notes: A widespread species showing considerable variation, sometimes geographically correlated, but for the most part not sufficiently discontinuous to allow reliable recognition of infraspecific taxa. Some specimens from the Shark Bay area and along the coast almost to Carnarvon have been separated as *Anthocercis* sp. Shark Bay (*T.E.H. Aplin* 3335) (Western Australian Herbarium 1998–). They have a more openly branched inflorescence, similar to that found in *A. ilicifolia*, but quite slender, pale yellow flowers, more characteristic of some forms of *A. littorea*. They are included here for the time being but are under investigation with a view to their possible recognition as a separate taxon at species or infraspecific level.

Like many related species, *A. littorea* is known to contain alkaloids of some toxicity but records of poisoning of stock and humans (children) (Gardner & Bennetts 1956, Cannon *et al.* 1969) are unsubstantiated and of uncertain identity – they may be based on material now known to represent the separate species *A. ilicifolia*.

The fruit are often malformed due to galling.

Illustrations: B.J. Grieve & W.E. Blackall, *How to Know Western Australian Wildflowers* 4: pl. I (1975) [note that the line drawing on p. 608 is of *A. ilicifolia*, at that time not recognised as distinct from *A. littorea*; likewise, the illustration labelled *A. littorea* in Gardner & Bennetts (1956: 175) is in fact of *A. ilicifolia*]; L. Haegi, *Flora of Australia* 29: 10, fig. 4; 14, fig. 5A, B (1982); J. Scott & P. Negus, *Field Guide to the Wildflowers of Australia's South West* 173, fig. 2 (2002); J.R. Wheeler *et al.*, *Flora of the South West* 2: 889 (2002); K. Dixon, *Coastal Plants* 87 (2011); *Anthocercis littorea*, in W.A. *FloraBase* (accessed March 2020); *Anthocercis littorea* eFlora S.A. fact sheet (accessed March 2020).

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Source: Revised edition published 18 March 2020. Adapted from R.W. Purdie, D.E. Symon & L. Haegi, Solanaceae, *Flora of Australia* Volume 29 (1982). Updated by L. Haegi (March 2020).

Nomenclature

CHAH (31 July 2018), *Australian Plant Census*

orthographic variant: *Anthocercis litorea* F.Muell.

taxonomic synonym: *Anthocercis glabella* Miers

Images



Fig. 1: '*Anthocercis littorea*' by Fagg, M. (© Australian National Botanic Gardens)



Fig. 2: '*Anthocercis littorea*' by Fagg, M. (© Fagg, M.)





Fig. 3: '*Anthocercis littorea*' by Ollerenshaw, P. (© Australian National Botanic Gardens)



Fig. 4: '*Anthocercis littorea*' by Fagg, M. (© Australian National Botanic Gardens)



Fig. 5: '*Anthocercis littorea*' by Fagg, M. (© Australian National Botanic Gardens)



Fig. 6: '*Anthocercis littorea*' by Fagg, M. (© Fagg, M.)



Fig. 7: '*Anthocercis littorea*' by Ollerenshaw, P. (© Director of National Parks)

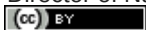


Fig. 8: '*Anthocercis littorea*' by Fagg, M. (© Fagg, M.)






Fig. 9: '*Anthocercis littorea*' by Fagg, M. (© Fagg, M.)





Fig. 10: '*Anthocercis littorea*' by Ollerenshaw, P. (© Director of National Parks)





Fig. 11: '*Anthocercis littorea*' by Fagg, M. (© Fagg, M.)





Fig. 12: '*Anthocercis littorea*' by Fagg, M. (© Fagg, M.)




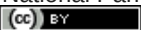
Fig. 13: '*Anthocercis littorea*' by Crisp, M. (© Director of National Parks)





Fig. 14: '*Anthocercis littorea*' by Crisp, M. (© Director of National Parks)




Fig. 15: '*Anthocercis littorea*' by Ollerenshaw, P. (© Director of National Parks)



Fig. 16: '*Anthocercis littorea*' by Thiele, K.R. (© Thiele, K.R.)



Acknowledgements

Editor

P.G. Kodela

