



Flowers of *D. stolonifera*
"Alpine form"



Allen Lowrie looking at colony
of *D. stolonifera* "Alpine form"
pink flowers.



Habit of *D. stolonifera* "Alpine form"

A FIELD TRIP TO TOOLBRUNUP PEAK*

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In November 1981, after my friend Robert Oliver had returned from a week-end with his family in the Stirling Ranges (Albany region), he reported to me that on the cliffs of Toolbrunup Peak, at about the 700M mark, he spotted what he thought might be a C.P. in the distance. He didn't really take much notice because the plants were off the main track up the mountain face. After talking about this C.P. possibility, we decided to organise a field trip to Toolbrunup Peak to investigate. I was rather excited at the possibility of finding a new species, since to date no Western Australian C.P. had been discovered at this altitude. (The Stirling Range area has the highest range in the southwest of Western Australia.)

On a Friday night in November 1981, Robert and I set off on the 400 KM drive to the Stirling Range. We arrived about 1:30 a.m. and crashed for the night under the stars. At first light, after breakfast, we set off for the walk up the mountain. The first 300M was okay as it consisted of slowly rising trails; afterwards, however, it was straight up. We were mostly on all fours climbing up and over large rocks, tree stumps and what-have-you. By stopping every 50M or so and resting, we finally arrived at the 700M mark. Walking off the main track to the right and slowly working our way up the cliff face we arrived at the place where Robert had spotted the C.P. Sure enough, they were C.P., but I couldn't identify them immediately. On further investigation, I concluded that they were a form of *D. stolonifera*. There are four basic growth forms of *D. stolonifera* found generally, but this one was a different form altogether, no doubt an alpine form, as in this region snow can be found on Bluff Knoll (1073M). Toolbrunup Peak height is 1052M.

After crawling up the face of Toolbrunup Peak between the 700M mark and the summit, I was lucky enough to find plants in flower. What a surprise to find these *D. stolonifera* "Alpine form" sporting pink flowers! Down on the lower sand plain, *D. stolonifera* is always found with white flowers. The trip up the mountain had certainly produced a new variety of C.P. *D. stolonifera* "Alpine form-Pink flowers" was truly the highlight of all my 1981 field trips. After Robert and I had explored the upper face of Toolbrunup Peak, we called it a day and set off down the mountain. I don't know which was worse—the climb up or the jarred legs on the way down.

Since it was November, the sand plain *D. stolonifera* had finished and were dying back and making up their new tubers, but the *D. stolonifera* "Alpine forms" were just coming into flower on Toolbrunup Peak. Where the *D. stolonifera* "Alpine form" grows is constantly wet, in complete shade all day long, as the plants were found on the South side of the mountain only. The plants were also found mostly growing under rock ledges and in a few cases we found groups of plants in small caves approximately 1M back into the cliff face. Even if the sun did get over to the south side of the mountain, the plants would be in complete shade all day long anyway. This type of C.P. discovery is fairly common here in Western Australia, new varieties are always coming to light anytime one can find a different soil type or different microclimate. Over the years I have only explored the one altitude (the sand plains and hills). The discovery of *D. stolonifera* "Alpine form-Pink flower" at the top of Toolbrunup Peak leads me to believe that the other peaks in the Stirling Range may produce different forms and species of C.P.

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