



Sandpaper Vine

Petrea Volubilis

Pronunciation	Pee-tree-uh vol-loo-bill-liss
Size	3-4 metres
Position	Prefers full sun, tolerates partial shade
Soil	Well drained slightly acidic soils
Care	Prune after flowering
Use	Cover pergolas, trellises, fences and hanging baskets
Family	Verbenaceae

This fast-growing woody vine, likened to a wisteria, is native to Central and South America and is a spectacular addition to the Bundaberg Botanic Gardens.

Stunning flowers

Show stopping purple flowers hang down like grapes with 15-30 flowers per cluster known as a raceme, deepening in colour towards the end.

On close inspection the vine's true flowers can be found in the middle of what are often mistaken for the vine's flowers. The flowers are small with 5 dark purple petals and are surrounded by the base or calyces of the flowers. Look closely and you'll see that one of the petals has a splash of white on it.

The calyces which are usually green in most flowers, are lighter purple in this species and are much larger and narrower than the true flowers.

The star shaped calyces stay on the plant long after the true flowers have fallen away helping to extend the colour, eventually turning grey then white.

In the Botanic Gardens the leaves mature around the end of March early April and the ground is littered with leaves. Blooms occur during the months of January to May. In our region it is common for the vine to flower outside of this period when the conditions are right.

A white coloured cultivar called *Albiflora* also exists.



What's in a name?

The Genus name *Petrea* pays tribute to Lord Robert James Petre (1713–1743) who was the English patron of botany and horticulture and was known for his collection of exotic plants. The Genus *petrea* includes evergreen flowering vines native to the tropical Americas. *Volubilis* comes from a Latin word meaning 'that turns itself around' or twining referring to how the plant grows.

Sandpaper like leaves

The Sandpaper vine gets its name from its stiff papery leaves which are rough to the touch like sandpaper. Growing to around 20 cm these large oval leaves are deeply veined and are dull green above and brighter underneath. The leaves have been known to be used as emery boards for nails, in the treatment for diabetes and even on shaven heads to create a shiny look.



Where can I find it in the Gardens?

Look for the vine in the circular Hinkler Garden behind Café 1928 and Hinkler House. Walk under the length of the archway shaped vine to appreciate the years of growth and tangle of vine on this large specimen and enjoy the colling effect this plant has.



Something for the junior botanists!

Explore with your hands

Touch the top of the leaf and underneath it, what can you feel?

Place your hand on the top of the leaf. Is your hand bigger or smaller than the leaf?

Look for small young leaves, do they feel the same or different as the larger older leaves?

How does the plant breathe?

Look closely on the green stems at the base of the leaves. Can you see light coloured egg shapes? These shapes are lenticles (pronounced len-tah-culls), they are always open and allow oxygen, carbon dioxide and water vapour to enter and leave the plant. Lenticles allow the plant to breathe.

Who lives here?

Are any animals visiting the sandpaper vine today? Bees, ants, spiders, butterflies or birds?

Find the real flowers!

The true flowers have five small purple petals with white on one of the petals. Can you find the real flowers?

Young or old?

Look at the colour of the flowers. If they are a dark purple, they are young flowers. If the flowers are light purple to grey and white then they are older.

Sun protection

Walk under the whole archway — look up, what can you see? Do you feel cooler or warmer under the arch or outside of the arch? How long do you think it took the plant to grow this big?