

VIOLA HEDERACEA LABILL. IN MALAYA

by

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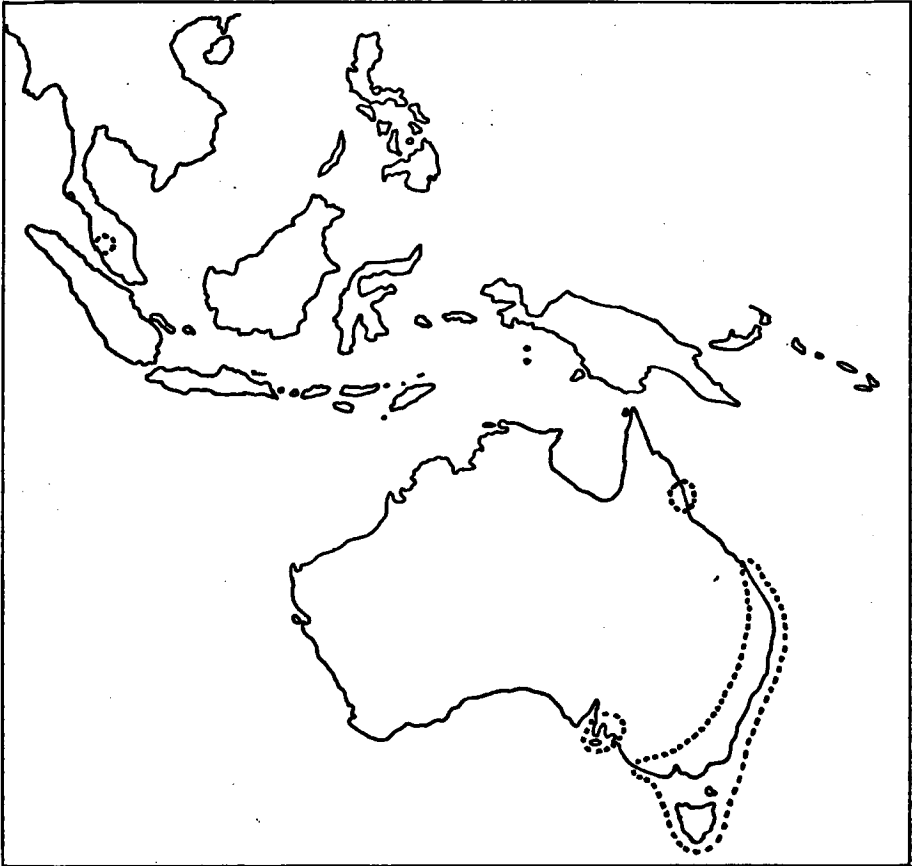
Becker (1917, 1925) considered *Viola hederacea* Labill., within which he placed *V. sieberiana* Spreng. (as *V. hederacea* var. *Sieberi* Hook. f.), to be the only member of Section *Erpetion* (Sweet) Becker and to belong to the 'Antarctic Floristic Element'. *V. hederacea* occurs widely in temperate southern and eastern Australia (Fig. 1) where it is somewhat variable, particularly in leaf shape, and may grade rather confusedly into *V. sieberiana*, as on Kangaroo Island, S. Australia.

Whilst examining a collection of violets on loan from the herbarium of the Papua and New Guinea Department of Forests, Lae, a specimen from Malaya was readily identified as *V. hederacea*: — MALAYA: Pahang Cameron Highlands, summit of Batu Brinchang, 'exposed escarpment; stoloniferous herb in thin grassy sward; flowers white with purple centre', 2031 m., 1. ix. 1956, H. M. Burkill 805 (LAE). The collection is identical with the most typical form in Australia, having the rosettes of leaves and flowers at intervals along the stolons, reniform leaves 1.4—2.0 times as long as broad with cordate base and showing the 'hederaceous' outline; the lateral petals are markedly bearded and the filiform style has a geniculate base and a simple stigma.

This record from north of the equator (4°30'N.) is an extremely interesting range extension for *V. hederacea* (Fig. 1) since it has a direct bearing on the problem of plant migration routes into and out of eastern Australia. At present this species must be hypothesised as having migrated from Australia to Malaya. *V. hederacea* was previously not known to occur further north than the Atherton Tablelands of Queensland (17° S.) and it will be interesting to watch for further extra-Australian occurrences. It has not been found amongst the fairly extensive *Viola* collections from New Guinea where the closely related but quite distinct *V. lagaipensis* Moore is present in alpine areas of Papua and the Territory of New Guinea (Moore, in press). It is tempting to think of *V. hederacea* as having migrated from Australia along Van Steenis' Sumatran migration track through Malaysia (Van Steenis, 1936; Burbidge, 1960) but only further collections will help to clarify this interesting distribution pattern.

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Distribution of *Viola hederacea*

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