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THE STATUS OF
DRUMMONDITA ERICOIDES HARV.
(RUTACEAE)

A Report Compiled By
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Drummondita Harv. is a small genus of woody shrubs largely confined to Southern Western Australia, but with one species disjunct in Northern Queensland (Wilson, 1971). Within Western Australia all species (and varieties) are largely exclusive in distribution (figure I) and habitat preferences. (Drummondita ericoides Harv. - lateritic clay; D. hassellii (F. Muell.) P.G. Wils. var hassellii - sandy soils; D. hassellii var longifolia P.G. Wils. - granitic soils; D. miniata (C.A. Gardn.) P.G. Wils. - granitic breakaways or loam soils).

Two species (D. hassellii and D. miniata) are relatively widespread at present, and in no danger. The variety longifolia of D. hassellii is known only from Peak Charles and Peak Elanora (isolated granite monadnocks, ca 40 Km W. of Dowak) and has been classified as rare. However, all known populations are contained in the Peak Charles National Park, so this species is not presently endangered. Drummondita ericoides has only rarely been collected, and always from White Peak, a detached hill of the Morseby Range (some 13 Km NNE of Geraldton). Since Hartley and Leigh had listed this species as probably extinct in their draft 1981 edition of Australian Plants at Risk (change from 2n to 2x because no recent collections are known). A brief search was undertaken for this species in August 1980.

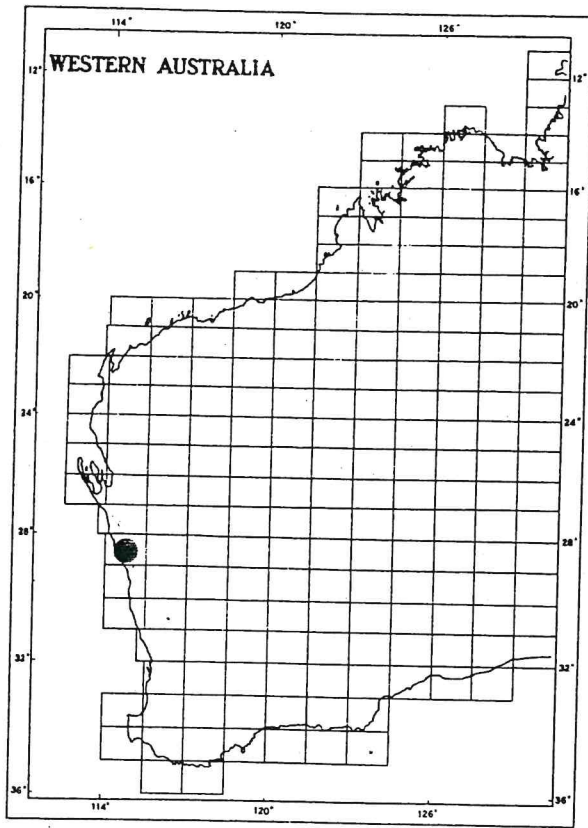
The Morseby Ranges are a series of mesas and buttes, rising to over 200 metres, and composed mainly of flat lying Mesozoic Strata capped by lateritic hardpan. The surrounding countryside is largely alluvia (or aeolian deposits), (some granite is found in the ranges).

There are a number of plants endemic to the range:

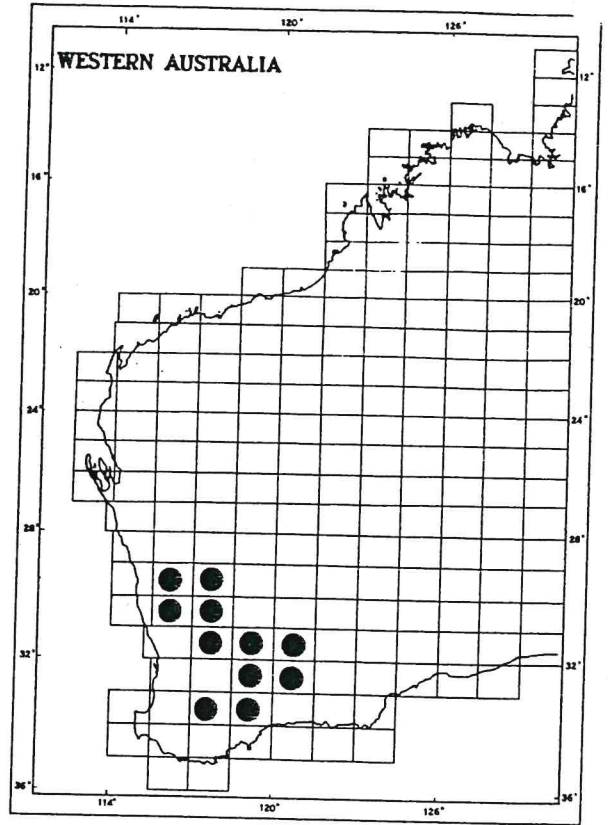
Ricinocarpus psilocladus (Muell-Arg.) Benth.

Grevillea bracteosa Meisn.

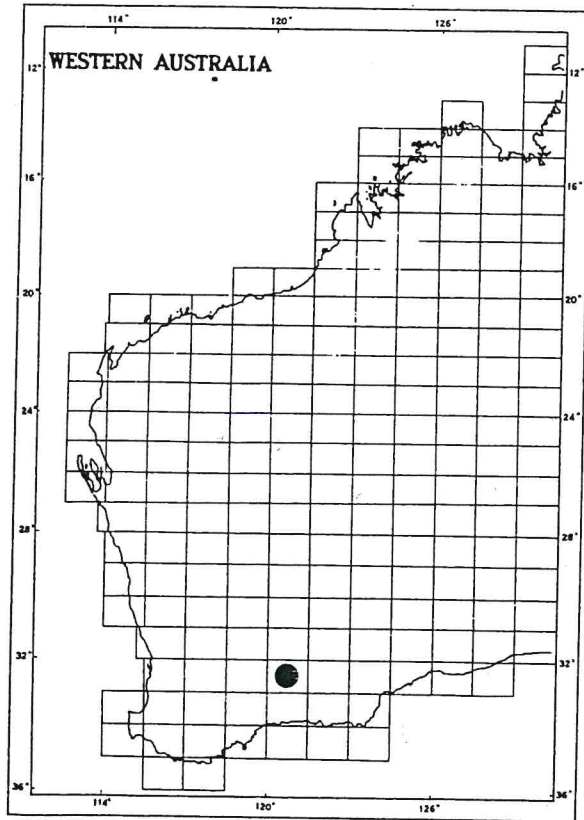
Acacia guinetii Maslin.



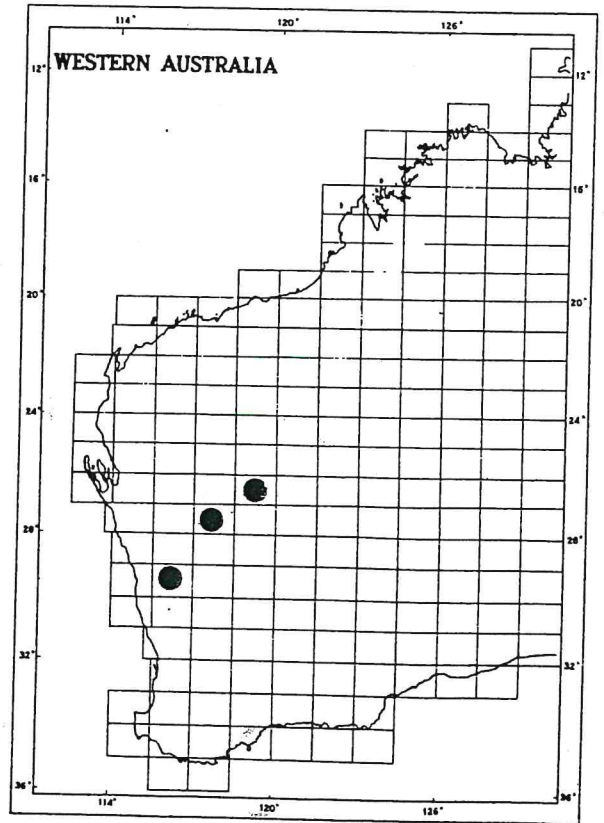
Drummondita ericoides



D. hassellii



D. hassellii var. *longifolia*



D. miniata

Fig 1 : Drummondita - distribution maps of individual species.



Drummondia ericoides : habit



White Peak, left hand ridge is *Drummondia* habitat.

Verticordia penicillaris F. Muell.

Drummondita ericoides Harv.

Gastrolobium spinosum Benth. var

triangulare Benth.

The type form of Gastrolobium propinquum C. A. Gardn.

Nearly all of these taxa (with the exception of D. ericoides) were located in the Howatharra Hills Reserve or on uncleared land adjacent to this reserve (which I believe is being purchased by the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife).

With the assistance of David Mell (Geraldton Wildlife Officer) White Peak was visited on 31-8-1980. The company searched the whole peak and I succeeded in finding only three plants of D. ericoides. These were found on a S W ridge about half way down the peak in an unburnt Mallee thicket. From casual observations it would appear that frequent fires and grazing are rapidly degrading the peak.

The Status of Drummondita ericoides

If this species is confined to White Peak it is rapidly heading for extinction unless the area can be fenced and a fire break placed around it.

A thorough survey of the Morseby Ranges is needed to ascertain if Drummondita ericoides has a wider range, and the adequacy of current reserves to protect the endemics and vegetation of the area.

Reference:

Wilson, P.G. (1971) Taxonomic Notes on the family Rutaceae, principally of Western Australia.
Nuytsia 1 : 197 - 207.