

Title: Conserving Disturbance Opportunists: how to make the most with an opportunity?

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Habitat disturbance was conventionally thought of as something to avoid when aiming for threatened flora recovery. However, some of the Midwest's threatened plants, including some of the most critically endangered, are likely to become extinct if we simply provide them with improved protection. Devoid of disturbance (fire or physical disturbance) these populations will senesce and die without ever recruiting new individuals into the population. This presents a conservation challenge, as both the landscape and patterns of disturbance have been vastly altered.

From the seemingly extinct *Gyrostemon reticulatus* to charismatic trigger plants, we outline the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions' on-ground trials to induce recruitment and manage a range of disturbance opportunists in the Midwest. Physical disturbance, smokewater and prescribed burns have had mixed results depending on the species. These recruitment trials have however shown that disturbance opportunists will require on-going management to maintain living populations, although not enough is known about most of these species to know what management is best. Further research is required to understand how to best conserve these species.