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Cinnamon sun orchid

003988

E n d a n g e r e d F l o r a o f W e s t e r n A u s t r a l i a

**If you think you have seen this plant, please call
CALM Mundaring District on (08) 9295 1955.**

The name *Thelymitra* is derived from the Greek *thelys* (feminine) and *mitra* (a turban or head dress), and refers to the ornate hood on the column of all species in the genus. Species of *Thelymitra* are known as sun orchids because their flowers remain closed at night or during cool, cloudy weather and open only on warm sunny days when there is little wind.

The flowers of *Thelymitra manginii* ms have a distinctive, strong cinnamon odour, resulting in the species being given its common name of cinnamon sun orchid. The species grows to 40 centimetres in height and has a broad leaf up to 15 centimetres long. Plants produce up to 10 or more golden-bronze flowers that are up to 5 centimetres across. The flowers appear from late October to mid November.

Cinnamon sun orchid was, until recently, confused with *Thelymitra dedmaniarum*, which is relatively common to the south-west of York.

Thelymitra manginii ms was first found growing north east of Perth in 1981 and was brought to CALM's attention by William Mangini in 1985. At the time it was thought to be a form of the Star Orchid (*Thelymitra stellata*). In 1987, S. Hopper, after comparison with the type specimen at the Adelaide Herbarium, concluded that it was *T. dedmaniae*. P. Wilson changed the name to *T. dedmaniarum* in 1994. It was not until 1996 when F. Hort found populations of the true *T. dedmaniarum* that it was realised that the populations north-east of Perth were of an undescribed taxon to be named *T. manginii* after William Mangini.

Cinnamon sun orchid is known from only two locations in the Gidgegannup area. It is confined to open wandoo woodland on red/brown sandy loam associated with dolerite and granite outcropping.

Populations of the species are exposed to threats such as weed invasion, road maintenance, firebreak maintenance, inappropriate fire regimes and animals digging up tubers.

Due to the rarity of the species and its small distribution, it was declared as Rare Flora in November 1997 and ranked as Critically Endangered in March 1999.

CALM has set up the Swan Region Threatened Flora Recovery Team to coordinate recovery actions that address threats to the



The golden yellow flowers of cinnamon sun orchid. Photo – Andrew Brown

survival of the species in the wild (see overleaf).

The species is currently known from just two populations and CALM is keen to know of any others.

If unable to contact the district office on the above number, please phone CALM's Wildlife Branch on (08) 9334 0422.

Recovery of a Species



CALM is committed to ensuring that Critically Endangered taxa do not become extinct in the wild. This is done through the preparation of a Recovery Plan (RP) or Interim Recovery Plan (IRP), which outlines the recovery actions that are required to urgently address those threatening processes most affecting the ongoing survival of threatened taxa in the wild and begin the recovery process.

IRPs are prepared by CALM and implemented by Regional or District Recovery Teams consisting of representatives from CALM, Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, community groups, private landowners, local shires and various government organisations.

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Recovery actions that have been, and will be, progressively implemented to protect the species include:

Protection from current threats: control of weeds; control of predators; conducting further surveys; and regular monitoring of the health of the populations.

Protection from future threats: the development of both a translocation proposal and a fire management strategy; collection and storage of seed at the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority; maintenance of live plants away from the wild (in botanical gardens); and researching the biology and ecology of the species. Other actions include ensuring that relevant authorities, landowners and CALM personnel are aware of the species' presence and the need to protect it, and that all are familiar with the threats identified in the Interim Recovery Plan.

IRPs will be deemed a success if the number of individuals within the population and/or the number of populations have increased.



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A close-up of cinnamon sun orchid. Photo – Andrew Brown



The habitat of cinnamon sun orchid. Photo – Emma Holland



Department of Conservation and Land Management