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Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions

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# Hughan's feather flower

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 the Department of Conservation and Land Management's Merredin District on (08) 9041 2488.**

Commonly known as Hughan's feather flower, *Verticordia hughanii* is a small openly to densely branched shrub 15-30 cm high by 35-75 cm across. The leaves are spreading and oblong. The foliage often changes to almost purple when plants are under stress during cold weather and summer heat. Flowers grow between the leaf and the stem, and are congregated towards the tip of the branches. They are unscented and appear between November and April. The floral tube is smooth, with five lobes divided into feathery segments. The petals are oval-shaped, ridged and minutely fringed towards the apex, and are bright red in colour.

Hughan's feather flower is similar to Drummond's feather flower (*Verticordia drummondii*) but has smaller flowers and lacks fringed margins to the petals.

A total of about 3500 plants are known from just two populations between Dowerin and Goomalling.

Habitat is pinkish white sand with gypsum crystals adjacent to saline flats and pink to yellow/grey sandy loam. In both areas plants grow in a low shrubland of *Acacia saligna*, *Acacia filifolia*, *Allocasuarina campestris*, *Banksia prionotes*, *Beaufortia interstans*, *Calothamnus brevifolius*, *Eremaea pauciflora*, *Grevillea hookeriana* subsp. *apiculoba*, *Grevillea paniculata* and *Verticordia densiflora*.

As just two populations are known, *Verticordia hughanii* was declared as Rare Flora in September 1987 and is currently ranked as Endangered under World Conservation Union (IUCN 2000) criteria.

The Merredin District Threatened Flora Recovery Team is coordinating recovery actions that address the greatest threats to the survival of the species in the wild (see overleaf).



A close up of the bright red flowers of Hughan's feather flower. Photo – A. Brown



A typical plant of Hughan's feather flower. Photo – A. Brown

## Recovery of a Species



CALM is committed to ensuring that threatened taxa do not become extinct in the wild. This is done through the preparation of an Interim Recovery Plan (IRP) that outlines the recovery actions 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, the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, community groups, private landowners, local shires and various government organisations.



# Hughan's feather flower

The main threats are uncontrolled vehicle access, poor recruitment, rabbits, weeds, salinity and inappropriate fire regimes.

The species is currently known from only 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 actions that have been recommended and will be progressively implemented to protect the species include:

- ongoing liaison with land managers,
- regular monitoring of the health of populations,
- further surveys,
- rabbit and weed control,
- trials to stimulate germination,
- collection and storage of seed,
- development and implementation of a fire management strategy, and
- investigation of the biology and ecology of the species.



Each flower has five feathery sepals and five minutely fringed petals. Photo – A. Brown

IRPs will be deemed a success if essential recovery actions have been implemented and identified threatening processes have been removed within three years of their adoption under the EPBC Act.



Plants reach full flower in late November. Photo – A. Brown