Maxwell's grevillea

Endangered Flora of Western Australia

If you think you've seen this plant, please call CALM Albany District on (08) 9842 4500

Commonly known as Maxwell's grevillea, *Grevillea maxwellii* has leaves that are up to 7.5 cm long with 3-6 lobes, each of which are divided further into three smaller lobes. Between August and September, the species produces large, red flowers at the ends of its branchlets. These branchlets usually bend downwards, with the flowers often sheltered beneath the foliage, giving the plant an attractive layered appearance.

Maxwell's grevillea is similar to *Grevillea asparagoides* but differs in its flower shape and its less spreading, shorter leaf lobes.

The species grows in areas of low, open heath in shallow, brown loamy soil over granite on rocky hilltops and slopes.

James Drummond first collected Maxwell's grevillea in 1840 from the Pallinup area. It was then not seen again until 1966, when Ken Newby discovered a population in the same area. In 1986, Greg Keighery located a few plants on the upper slopes of the river, and in 1994 two new populations were found.

Maxwell's grevillea has large red flowers and prominently lobed leaves. Photo – Ellen Hickman

The species was declared as Rare Flora in 1994 and ranked as Critically Endangered in 1995.

CALM has set up the Albany District Threatened Flora Recovery Team to co-ordinate recovery actions addressing the most threatening processes affecting the species' survival in the wild (See overleaf).

The main threat is habitat degradation from weed invasion (mainly by wild oats), which increases the fire hazard and encourages grazing.

Maxwell's grevillea is currently known from only five, mostly small 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.

A mature plant of Maxwell's grevillea. Photo – Ellen Hickman

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, Kings Park and Botanic Garden, community groups, private landowners, local Shires and various government organisations.

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Essential recovery actions that have been implemented to protect the species include:

Protection from current threats: Leaving buffers of natural vegetation around the plants; development of a fire protection plan; control of introduced weeds and the regular monitoring of the health of each population.

Protection from future threats: Ensuring that relevant authorities, land owners and CALM personnel are aware of the species' presence and the need to protect it, and that all are familiar with the threatening processes identified in the Interim Recovery Plan.

Desirable recovery actions, which are progressively being implemented, include:

Ensuring that land containing the largest population is set aside as a nature reserve; collection of seed by CALM's Threatened Flora Seed Centre; maintenance of live plants away from the wild (i.e. in botanical gardens), conducting further surveys, researching the biology and ecology of the species; and enhancing plant numbers by the amelioration of a limiting factor, or by direct propagation and translocation techniques.

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 approval.

Attractive bright red flowers are produced in late winter and spring. Photo – Diana Papenfus

Habitat of Maxwell's grevillea with the Stirling Ranges in the background. Photo – Diana Papenfus

Department of Conservation and Land Management