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Small-flowered Conostylis

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've seen this plant, please call
CALM Geraldton District on (08) 9921 5955**

Small flowered conostylis (*Conostylis micrantha*) grows as small, tufted clumps of narrow leaves that spread to 30 cm in diameter. In July and August, it produces tiny, yellow-cream flowers that age to a distinctive brick red colour. These flowers are the smallest in the genus, hence the common name, small flowered conostylis.

The species occurs in areas of low shrubland on white-grey soils in the Dongara area.

Small flowered conostylis differs from the closely related *Conostylis teretifolia* in having longer leaf hairs, which are confined to the base of the leaves, an earlier flowering time and smaller flowers.

The species was ranked as Critically Endangered in 1995, and CALM has set up the Geraldton District Threatened Flora Recovery Team to co-ordinate recovery actions addressing the most threatening processes affecting its survival in the wild. (See overleaf.)

Threats include weeds, degraded habitat, and damage during road maintenance.

As small flowered conostylis is known from only a few places, and all are within a 15-kilometre radius of each other, we are eager 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 close up of flowers, illustrating the deep yellow centre and pale tips to the tepals. Photo – L. Sweedman



A whole plant. Note the tufted clumping habit and narrow grass-like leaves. Photo – E. Holland

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: The control of introduced weeds, fencing, and regular monitoring of the health of each population.

Protection from future threats: The erection of signs that mark the site of each population, and the development of a fire protection plan.

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

Enhancing plant numbers by removal of weeds, amelioration of some other limiting factor, or by direct propagation and translocation techniques; the collection of seed; the maintenance of live plants away from the wild (i.e. in botanical gardens); ensuring that relevant authorities, land owners and CALM personnel are aware of the presence of small-flowered conostylis and the need to protect it, and that all are familiar with the threatening processes identified in the IRP; conducting further surveys; and researching the biology and ecology of the small-flowered conostylis.

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.



Note the brick red colour of spent flowers. Photo – E. Holland



Typical low shrubland habitat of small-flowered conostylis. Photo – L. Sweedman

