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Wongan Gully wattle

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 (CALM's) Merredin District office on (08) 9041 2488.

Wongan Gully wattle is a spindly, open, erect shrub up to four metres tall. It can be distinguished from other species by the sparsely branched main stems and the short phyllodes, which tend to be concentrated at the ends of the branches. Golden flower heads also tend to concentrate at the ends of branches. Flowering occurs mainly between August and September.

Wongan Gully wattle typically grows among *Allocasuarina* and *Melaleuca* overstorey in densely vegetated gullies, on deep red clays derived from greenstone fragments.

Wongan Gully wattle is known from 137 plants in one population on a private property near the township of Wongan Hills. Due to its restricted distribution and extreme rarity, the species is currently ranked Critically Endangered. Genetic studies have discovered that Wongan Gully wattle has a distinct lack of close relatives. This indicates that it should be considered a relict species.

Major threats to Wongan Gully wattle include inappropriate fire regime, wildfire and critically small populations. Annual monitoring of Wongan Gully wattle keeps the knowledge of the population current including any natural regeneration that may be occurring. Tagging and recording the location of plants as well as liaison with stakeholders are important recovery actions currently being undertaken to minimise these threats. CALM is working closely with landholders and fencing work has commenced to protect this species from grazing.

CALM is developing the Wongan-Ballidu Threatened Flora Management Program, which outlines recovery actions identified for this species and a range of others. CALM has also formed the Merredin District Threatened Flora Recovery Team, which coordinates recovery actions that address the threats to the Wongan Gully wattle and other species in the wild.

Storage of seeds at CALM's Threatened Flora Seed Centre provides ex-situ conservation in case a catastrophic event such as wildfire occurs. Developing a fire management strategy and



Wongan gully wattle produces golden flowers in late winter-spring. Photo – Stephen Hopper

researching the biology and ecology of the species will also enhance our understanding of the species for improved management.

Recovery of a Species



CALM is committed to ensuring that Declared Rare Flora does not become extinct in the wild. This is done through the preparation of a Recovery Plan (RP) or Interim Recovery Plan (IRP) that outline the recovery actions that are required to urgently address the 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 made up of representatives from CALM, the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, the Department of Agriculture, community groups, private landowners, local shires and various government organisations.

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

- ongoing liaison with land managers;
- stimulation of regeneration;
- implementation of further surveys;
- regular monitoring of the health of the populations;
- collection and storage of seeds at CALM's Threatened Flora Seed Centre;
- maintenance of live plants away from the wild (i.e. in botanical gardens);
- carrying out of weed control as necessary;
- development of a fire management strategy; and
- investigation of the biology and ecology of the species.

IRPs will be deemed a success if the number of individuals within the population and/or the number of populations have increased by 10 per cent.

This poster was prepared by the Department of Conservation and Land Management.



The flowers and leaf-like phyllodes of Wongan gully wattle are concentrated at the ends of branches. Photo – Nicole Willers



Wongan gully wattle occurs as part of a dense shrub layer, typically found on greenstone-schistose soil types. Photo – Nicole Willers

