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Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

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Pythara grevillea

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 Merredin District on (08) 9041 2488**

Recognised as a new species in 1990, *Pythara grevillea* (*Grevillea pythara*) is an attractive low-growing, multi-stemmed shrub with grey-green leaves that are covered with fine hairs. It grows to about 20 cm high, and spreads to several metres across when mature. Between four and eight black-tipped, red flowers are produced at the end of each branchlet.

The species flowers mainly between July and December, but also flowers sporadically at other times of the year.

Pythara grevillea, which was discovered by Jan Wellburn, the daughter of a local landowner, is known only from an area of remnant vegetation on a degraded road reserve near Dalwallinu.

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

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

Threats include severe weed infestation, grazing and trampling by passing stock, road maintenance and rising salinity.

Pythara grevillea is currently known from a single population 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.



The distinctive black-tipped brick-red flowers of *Pythara grevillea*. Photo – Andrew Brown



New growth emerging from underground rootstock, illustrating the clonal nature of the species. Photo – Emma 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.

Pythara grevillea

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

Protection from current threats: The control of introduced weeds, addition of a buffer area in adjacent farmland, monitoring of the health of the population, and the relocation of an access track and gate.

Protection from future threats: The development of a fire protection plan; and 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:

The collection and storage of seed at 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 *Pythara grevillea*, and enhancing plant numbers by the amelioration of a limiting factor, or by direct propagation and translocation techniques.



A plant in full flower in late July. Photo – Sue Patrick



Note the grey-green leaves covered in fine hairs. Photo – Luke Sweedman

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.



The highly degraded road reserve habitat of *Pythara grevillea*. Photo – Emma Holland

