Tufted plumed featherflower

Endangered Flora of Western Australia

If you think you've seen this plant, please call the Busselton District office of the Department of Conservation and Land Management on (08) 9752 1677.

Tufted plumed featherflower, also known as *Verticordia plumosa* var. *ananeotes*, is a small shrub to 40 cm tall with several to many simple or sparsely branched stems, and a small lignotuber. The leaves are sparse on the main stems, but dense on the short branchlets that come off those stems. They are abruptly acute, up to 14 mm long and less than 1 mm wide. The pink flowers occur in small groups on peduncles 4-7 mm long and appear from December to January. The variety is easily recognised by its distinctive densely tufted habit, simple stems, long internodes and long slender leaves.

The species is distinguised by its densely bunched habit and long slender leaves. Photo – Diana Papenfus

Verticordia plumosa var. *ananeotes* was named after the Greek *ana-* (again) and *neos* (new, recent) which is in reference to the plant's ability to resprout after fire from its small woody stock.

Tufted plumed featherflower was first collected in 1839 by Ludwig Preiss and named by Alex George in 1991. It was collected six times between 1839 and 1900, but then was presumed extinct until collected by Dennis Cooper in early 1992.

Tufted plumed featherflower has been recorded between Mundijong and Waroona, the Blackwood and Vasse Rivers and the "Molloy Plains" near Busselton. It is found in sandy soils in open jarrah woodland and in sandy plains with a range of Myrtaceous and Proteaceous species.

The rarity of tufted plumed featherflower is probably due in part to the amount of clearing that has occurred for agricultural purposes in the south west region of Western Australia. The species is under threat from inappropriate fire regimes, chemical drift from herbicide and fertiliser applications from adjacent farmland, road, track and firebreak maintenance activities, dieback disease (caused by the plant pathogen *Phytophthora cinnamomi*) and weed invasion.

Tufted plumed featherflower was ranked as Critically Endangered in 1998 and the Department of Conservation and Land Management (the Department), through the direction of the South West Region Threatened Flora and Communities Recovery Team, has been addressing the most threatening factors affecting its survival in the wild (see overleaf).

Tufted plumed featherflower is currently known from three populations consisting of around 380 plants. We are eager to hear of any other populations.

If unable to contact the District office on the above number please contact the Department's Wildlife Branch on (08) 9334 0422.

Recovery of a Species

The Department 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 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 the Department and implemented by Regional or District Recovery Teams consisting of representatives from the Department, Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, community groups, private landowners, local shires and various government organisations.

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Recovery actions that are being implemented are:

Protection from current threats: these include the erection of signs that mark the site of the populations; control of introduced weeds; the development of a fire management strategy to protect the species from inappropriate fire regimes; the maintenance of dieback hygiene; and regular monitoring of the health of the populations.

Protection from future threats: these include the collection and storage of seed; the maintenance of live plants away from the wild (ie. in botanic gardens); conducting further surveys; researching the biology and ecology of tufted plumed featherflower; enhancing plant numbers by direct propagation and translocation techniques; and ensuring that relevant authorities, land owners and Department personnel are aware of its presence and the need to protect it, and that all are familiar with the threatening processes identified in the Interim Recovery Plan.

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

This poster is sponsored by the Endangered Species Progam of the Natural Heritage Trust.

Pink feathery flowers appear from December to January. Photo – Anne Cochrane

Degraded road reserve habitat of tufted plumed feather flower. Photo – Meredith Spencer

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