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Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions

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# Wagin banksia

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 Narrogin District on (08) 9881 9200 or Katanning District on (08) 9821 1296.**

Commonly known as Wagin banksia, *Banksia oligantha* is an erect shrub or small tree growing up to five metres high, with few main stems. It has a superficial resemblance to the parrot bush (*Dryandra sessilis*) when not in flower. Its grey bark is smooth, becoming lightly fissured with age. The leaves of juvenile plants resemble oak/acorn leaves and become more rigid and pointed with age. When mature, the leaves are shining green on top and paler below. They are oval, with the smaller end at the base, and are 1.5 to 3.7 cm long by 4 to 20 mm wide, and quite concave.

The leaf margins have between two and four prickly 'teeth' on each side. Flower heads are dome shaped, 2.5 to 3cm wide, and hold 20 to 35 distinctive flowers, contrasting with up to 50 for the closely related matchstick banksia (*B. cuneata*). Flowers are initially cream with a red base but turn orange-brown with age. Flowering occurs between October and November. Fruits have between one and six pale grey, dark mottled follicles which open spontaneously in the absence of fire.

Wagin banksia differs from matchstick banksia in that it has fewer flowers. It has creamy yellow flowers, roughened basal bark, shiny green upper surface of leaves and follicles which open readily in the absence of fire.

Wagin banksia is known from a total of 1700 plants in four populations over a range of 100 km in the 450-500mm rainfall zone between Harrismith and Kojonup. Populations are generally located in low-lying areas close to river systems but plants are also occasionally found on higher dune systems.



Note the unusual cream and red *Dryandra*-like flowers and the short, blunt leaves of Wagin banksia.  
Photo - A.G.Wells

Habitat is deep white to white-grey, yellow-brown sands in tall open low woodland over heath. Associated species include *Banksia attenuata*, *B. prionotes*, *Allocasuarina huegeliana*, *Nuytsia floribunda*, *Eremaea pauciflora*, *Leptospermum erubescens*, *Conospermum distichum* and *Conostylis villosa*.

As few populations are known and the species is restricted to a highly cleared area of the wheatbelt it was declared as Rare Flora in September 1987 and is ranked as Endangered under World Conservation Union (IUCN 2000) criteria.

The Narrogin and Katanning District Threatened Flora Recovery Teams are coordinating recovery actions that address the greatest threats to the survival of the species in the wild (see overleaf).

## Recovery of a Species



CALM is committed to ensuring that threatened taxa do not become extinct in the wild. This is done through the preparation of an Interim Recovery Plan (IRP) that outlines the recovery actions 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, the Botanic Garden and Parks Authority, community groups, private landowners, local shires and various government organisations.

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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 adoption under the EPBC Act.



Top: The fruit of Wagin banksia has between one and six follicles. Photo - S. Hopper



Wagin banksia in full flower. Photo - A.G. Wells

The main threats are poor recruitment, inappropriate fire regimes, grazing by rabbits, limited habitat, habitat fragmentation, drought, chemical drift and weeds. Salinity may also possibly become a threat in the future.

The species is currently known from four 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.

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

- ongoing liaison with land managers,
- regular monitoring of the health of populations,
- further surveys,
- rabbit control,
- fencing,
- disturbance trials,
- development and implementation of a fire management strategy, and
- investigation of the biology and ecology of the species.



A mature plant of Wagin banksia. Photo - S. Hopper