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Wongan cactus

003988

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
CALM Merredin District on (08) 9041 2488.**

Commonly known as Wongan cactus, *Daviesia euphorbioides* is a leafless, spreading shrub to 45 centimetres high with erect, cylindrical, very thick slightly tapered branches. Instead of leaves it has small, prickly, conical scales. The flowers have orange-yellow standard petals, deep red or purplish keel petals and form clusters that are produced from the axils of the scales. Flowering occurs from August to September.

Wongan cactus is easily recognised by its cactus-like habit. It is thought that plants mature very quickly and live for just a few years. The species extends from Wongan Hills to south of Dowerin, covering a geographic range of approximately 85 kilometres. It grows in sandplain habitat, often with sticky hemigenia (*Hemigenia viscida*).

Wongan cactus is a short-lived species that requires soil disturbance to regenerate from seed. All known populations are in areas that have been graded or burnt. Threats include clearing, road and rail maintenance, weed invasion and inappropriate fire regimes.

Due to the low numbers of plants and their threatened habitat, Wongan cactus was declared as Rare Flora in October 1986 and ranked as Critically Endangered in February 1997.

CALM has set up the Merredin District Threatened Flora Recovery Team to coordinate recovery actions that address threats to the survival of the species in the wild (see overleaf).

The species is currently known from 13 widely scattered populations, most of which consist of less than ten plants. 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.



Wongan cactus produces masses of attractive orange, red and yellow pea flowers in late winter-spring. Photo – Stephen Hopper

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, Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, community groups, private landowners, local shires and various government organisations.

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

Protection from current threats: control of weeds; conducting further surveys; and regular monitoring of the health of each population.

Protection from future threats: the development of both a translocation proposal and a fire management strategy; collection and storage of seed at CALM's Threatened Flora Seed Centre; maintenance of live plants away from the wild (in botanical gardens); and researching the biology and ecology of the species. Other actions include ensuring that relevant authorities, landowners and CALM personnel are aware of the species' presence and the need to protect it, and that all are familiar with the threats 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.



Natural Heritage Trust

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Wongan cactus has very thick, cylindrical branches with leaves reduced to small scales.
Photo – Stephen Hopper



A mature plant of Wongan cactus in full flower. Photo – Stephen Hopper

