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Department of Biodiversity,
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Large-articled samphire

Endangered flora of Western Australia

If you think you've seen this plant, please call the Department of Environment and Conservation's (DEC's) Geraldton District on (08) 9921 5955.

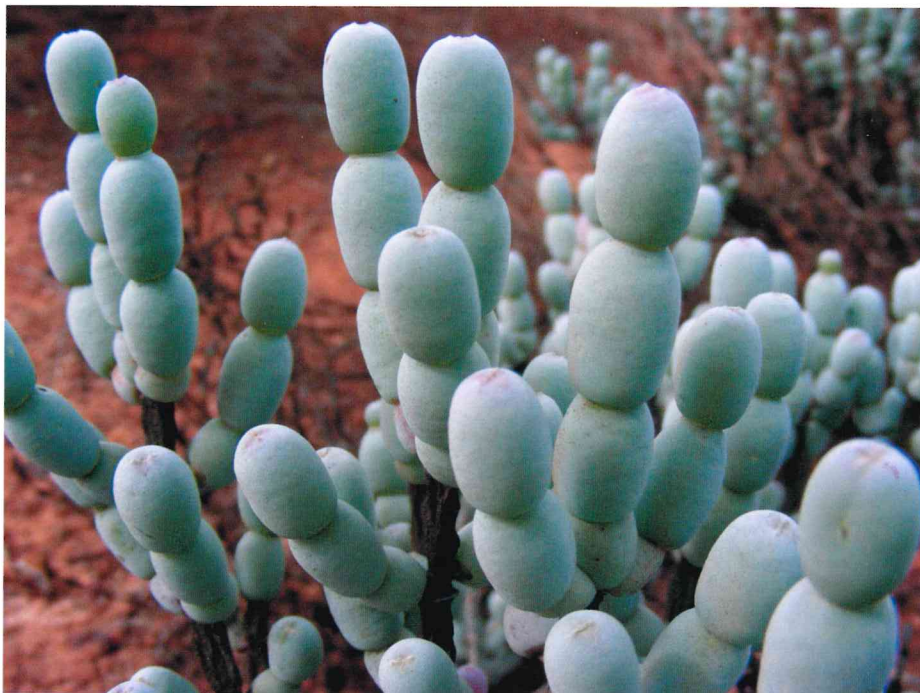
Samphires are shrubs that are adapted to cope with both saline conditions and very high temperatures. Their stems are thick and succulent and are divided into articles (joints), while the leaves are much reduced in size.

Large-articled samphire (*Tecticornia bulbosa*) is a low sprawling shrub, up to one metre tall and two to three metres in diameter, with spreading branches. It is easily distinguished from other samphires by its large articles which are 15 millimetres long and 12 millimetres wide, hairless, and a distinctive pale blue or pink colour. The thick, waxy, powdery coating on the articles is another distinctive characteristic. The colour and coating of the stems protects the plant from light and heat, allowing it to maintain cooler temperatures and conserve water. The fleshy stems allow water storage, thereby facilitating the dilution of salt within the plant.

Flowering occurs on spikes that are 15 to 20 millimetres long and occur both laterally and terminally on the branches. Like most samphires, the flowers occur in groups of three and are bisexual (produce both male and female parts) but the flowers are hidden by the surrounding bracts. Flowering spikes dry out to a dark brown-black colour and persist on the plant. Flowering occurs in April.

Large-articled samphire is known from just one population near Morawa in the northern wheatbelt. It occurs on saline flats along a drainage line in a low open heathland dominated by a range of samphire and saltbush species, in association with an open wattle and melaleuca scrub. The soil at the site is yellow-brown clay and loam.

Large-articled samphire is currently listed as rare under the Western Australian *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950* and, due to its restriction to only one population, ranked as vulnerable.



Stem of large-articled samphire. Photo – Gemma Phelan



Typical soil associated with large-articled samphire. Photo – Gemma Phelan

Recovery of a species


DEC 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 outline the recovery actions that are required to urgently address those threatening processes most affecting the ongoing survival of the threatened species in the wild and begin the recovery process.

IRPs are prepared by DEC and implemented by regional or district recovery teams consisting of representatives from DEC, Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, community groups, private landowners, local shires and various government organisations.

PAM02406



Department of
Environment and Conservation

Our environment, our future 



Large-articled samphire

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

It is listed as vulnerable under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

DEC has set up the Geraldton District Threatened Flora Recovery Team to coordinate actions that address the greatest threats to the survival of the species in the wild.

The main threats to large-articled samphire are road works, altered water patterns, restricted distribution and increasing salinity.

The species is known from just one population and DEC is keen to know of any others.

If you are unable to contact the District Office, please phone DEC's Species and Communities Branch on (08) 9334 0455.

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

- installation of rare flora markers to ensure road workers in the vicinity of the plants are aware of the species and its significance;
- liaison with land managers to ensure works in the area do not impact on the populations;
- regular monitoring of the health of the populations and the hydrology regime;
- collection and storage of seed;
- surveys for new populations; and
- fencing of the population to protect from stock.

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

This project is funded by the Australian and State governments' investment through the Natural Heritage Trust, administered in the Midwest Region by the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council.



Habitat of large-articled samphire. Large-articled samphire shrubs can be clearly distinguished by their pale blue colouring. Photo – Gemma Phelan



Stem of large-articled samphire with both pale blue and pink coloured articles. Photo – Gemma Phelan