



ENDANGERED



THREE SPRINGS DAVIESIA

A member of the pea family (Fabaceae), the Three Springs davisia is a straggling, much branched shrub that grows to about two metres in height. Daviesias do not have true leaves, but are similar to the wattles in having modified leaf stems (phyllodes) that are remarkably leaf-like in appearance. The small, typically pea-shaped flowers are yellow-maroon in colour and appear quite early in the season, usually from July to early September.

Although first collected by W.E. Blackall between Coorow and Arrino in 1932, this attractive shrub is yet to be named by taxonomists. Further collections were made by R.T. Lange, north of Three Springs in 1958, and Charles Chapman, a noted amateur Western Australian botanist, near the Arrowsmith River in 1972 and 1973. Repeat surveys of these areas between 1975 and 1980 by Dr Mike Crisp (Australian National University) and Charles Chapman found only one surviving population.

At that time, the Three Springs davisia was thought to be one of

Western Australia's most endangered plants. It was gazetted as 'declared rare flora' in September 1987. Fortunately, more recent finds by Three Springs Shire gardener, Charles Strahan, have significantly improved the species chance of survival in the wild. His most recent find was on private property, in January 1995.

Three Springs davisia is endemic to the Three Springs area of Western Australia, surviving in just five mostly small populations over a distance of 10 kilometres. Its favoured habitat is near the crests of hills, where it grows on lateritic gravel and brown sandy-loam among open mallee scrub and heath, but clearing of native vegetation for agriculture has significantly reduced available habitat. The species appears to be a disturbance opportunist. Current roadside populations are likely to

have appeared since the shoulders of the roads were graded, and one population occurs in an old gravel pit.

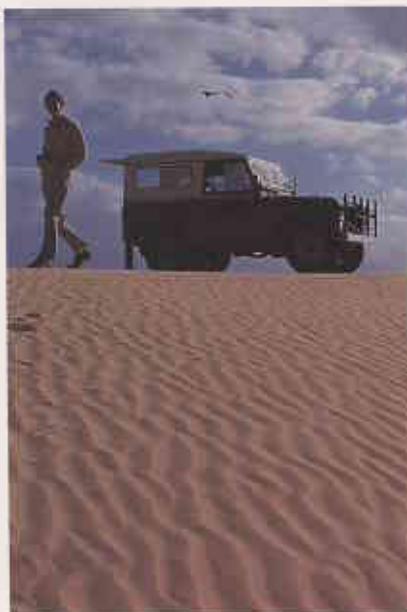
Biological factors may also be influencing the rarity of the species. Thomas Schwarten, of Kings Park and Botanic Garden, has found that the majority of seeds produced by the plant are sterile. This may mean that self pollination does not produce viable seed and that transfer of pollen from the flowers of one plant to those of another is required.

Due to the extreme threats to this species' survival in the wild, Interim Wildlife Management Guidelines (IWMGs) are being written by CALM's Western Australian Threatened Species and Communities Unit (WATSCU). Eventually, a full Recovery Plan will be written to replace these guidelines, with a long term aim of achieving self-sustaining natural populations. The species is also one of many covered by the forthcoming Moora District Threatened Flora Management Program.

By Andrew Brown
Photos by Andrew Brown
and Sue Patrick

LANDSCOPE

VOLUME TEN NO. 4 WINTER ISSUE 1995



Cooperation between 4WD clubs and CALM is helping to protect WA's special recreation spots through a program of education. See 'Go Lightly' on page 17.



The noisy scrub-bird is one species that is responding well to its recovery plan. 'Recovering from the Brink' (page 10) discusses how such plans are drawn up.



Mt Augustus is the biggest rock in the world; yet few people know it exists. Find out more about this natural wonder on page 28.



There is a great deal written and talked about our forests. But what are the facts? 'Looking Beyond the Obvious' (page 22) dispels some of the myths.



Specially developed computer software is helping speed the identification of plant species in 'The Smart Collection' (page 49).

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COVER

The rainbow bee-eater is a common bird found throughout most parts of the State, including Mt Augustus National Park.

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