



ENDANGERED!



CUNDERDIN DAVIESIA

Cunderdin davisia (*Daviesia cunderdin*) is one of Western Australia's rarest species. Just four mature plants are known from a single, narrow, very degraded road reserve near Cunderdin (the town from which it receives both its common and scientific names). Threats include future roadworks, weeds, chemical overspray during road and farm operations, little remaining habitat and poor germination or death of seedlings before they flower.

When Joanna Seabrook first discovered Cunderdin davisia in 1996, she counted between five and six plants, but over the next three years that number had dwindled to four, mainly due to plants dying from old age. The remaining four plants are also showing signs of old age and are unlikely to survive for more than a few more years, even with recovery actions in place. Fortunately, through the efforts of Frank Obbens, several seedlings have appeared and are doing well. Frank, who is on contract

to CALM, is conducting weed-control research and assessing the effect of fire on recruitment of a number of Critically Endangered flora. It is known that fire stimulates the germination of soil stored seed of many species of *Daviesia* and, with this in mind, Frank burnt one of the dead Cunderdin davisia plants to see if he could encourage some germination. This action proved to be most successful and, with the addition of weed control, may have provided the catalyst to save the species.

An Interim Recovery Plan that outlines a number of essential recovery actions is being produced by CALM. The Merredin District Threatened Flora Recovery Team is overseeing the implementation of these actions, which include: the development of effective strategies to control introduced weeds; conducting research into fire and its effect on germination

of soil stored seed; rehabilitation of the species' habitat; translocations into more protected areas; and regular monitoring of the population.

A two-sided A4 poster has been produced to help CALM and Shire employees and community members identify the species and to encourage them to look for further populations. This poster contains descriptive information, lists threats and recovery actions and illustrates the species and its habitat.

Cunderdin davisia is a rather nondescript shrub when vegetative, but when in flower, between mid April and early June, it produces massed displays of bright red pea flowers, each up to 18 millimetres across. These have a unique standard petal 12–15 millimetres long, which remains partly folded and bears a pair of deltoid appendages at the base. Each plant grows to 1.6 metres high and 1.5 metres across. The phyllodes (leaf stalks that resemble leaves) are flattened in appearance and have a sharp tip.

By Andrew Brown

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Winner of the 1998 Alex Harris Medal for excellence in science and environment reporting.

LANDSCOPE



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In 'Photographing a Temperate Wonderland' (page 10), photographers Sue Morrison and Ann Storrie share their experiences.



In 'Those Spotted Things' (page 22), we see how fox-baiting and captive breeding continues to swell populations of this popular native mammal.



Snakes. You either love them or hate them, but how do we live with them? See story on page 45.



Many farmers and landowners are turning to plantation pine for a variety of good reasons. Five of them tell us why. See 'A Crop of Forests' on page 38.



As habitat changes, so do species populations. But just when does a species become threatened? See 'Healing the Land' on page 49.

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The magnificent gorges of Karijini National Park are a refreshing retreat from the arid plains above. They also have a fascinating geological history. See story on page 28.

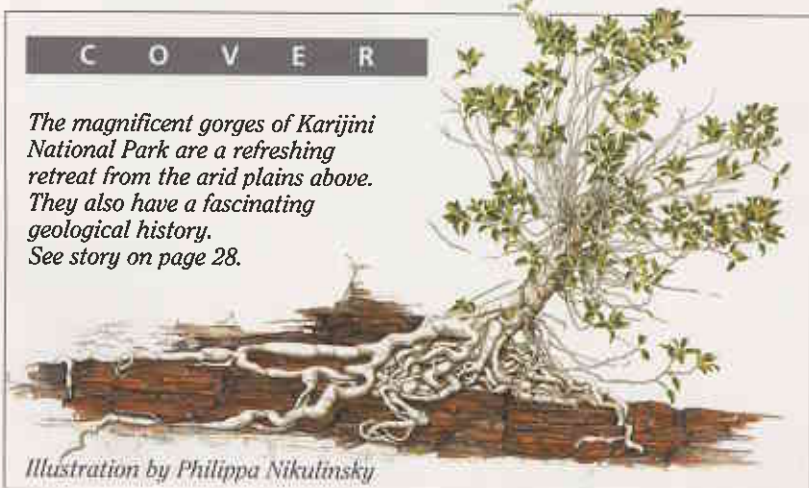


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