Threatened Species of the Northern Territory

DESERT FLANNEL FLOWER

Actinotus schwarzii

Conservation status
Australia: Vulnerable
Northern Territory: Vulnerable


Whole plant

Description

The desert flannel flower is an erect perennial shrub to 60 cm with soft dense tomentum. The leaves are dissected; the flowers are large, showy and daisy like, forming a dense head to 2.5 cm diameter. The fruit are covered with silky hairs to 3 mm long.

Flowering: Jul, Oct – Jan.

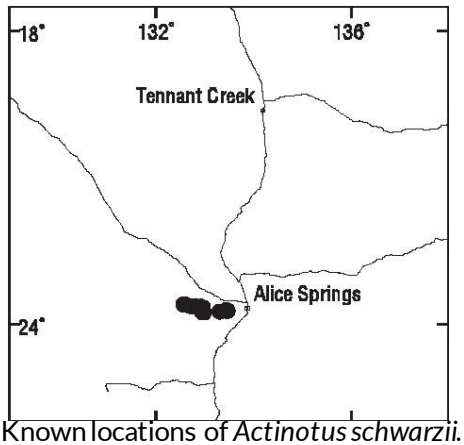
Fruiting: Dec.


(leaves and flowers)

Distribution

This species is endemic to the Chewings and Heavitree Ranges in the West MacDonnell Ranges. It is known from only approximately six locations, each highly restricted in size (White *et al.* 2000). It is also purported to occur in the Petermann Ranges (Central Ranges bioregion). The latitudinal range of this species from current records is 19 km and its longitudinal range is 90 km.

Conservation reserves where reported:
West MacDonnell National Park.



Known locations of *Actinotus schwarzii*.

Ecology

The desert flannel flower occurs exclusively in sheltered gorges and on steep south-facing precipices.

Conservation assessment

This species qualifies as **Vulnerable** (under criteria D1+2) based on:

- number of mature individuals estimated to be <1000; and
- a very restricted area of occupancy estimated to be <20 km^2.

It is an attractive and naturally 'rare' species. Most populations occur within the West MacDonnell National Park. Accurate estimates of the total population are difficult due to the rugged and often inaccessible habitat. Little is known of the population structure and dynamics, and reproductive biology of this species.

Threatening processes

Given the limited number of populations and their relatively small size, the species is potentially threatened by stochastic events such as wildfire or disease. Seed collecting and flower picking are potential threats, particularly at more accessible locations.

Conservation objectives and management

The possible occurrence in the Petermann Ranges needs to be investigated. Focused studies should include a systematic assessment of factors that may threaten the species. Known populations should be monitored.

Complied by

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References

White, M., Albrecht, D., Duguid, A., Latz, P., and Hamilton, M. (2000). *Plant species and sites of botanical significance in the southern bioregions of the Northern Territory. Volume 1: significant vascular plants.* A report to the Australian Heritage Commission. (Arid Lands Environment Centre, Alice Springs.)