

# Threatened Species of the Northern Territory

## *Pternandra coerulescens*

### Conservation status

Australia: Not listed

Northern Territory: Vulnerable



Photo: K. Brennan

### Description

*Pternandra coerulescens* is a medium-sized tree to 15 m, or several-stemmed erect rambling shrub to 6 m tall. It has apricot-grey smoothish bark. The leaves are ovate, three-nerved, and opposite. The flowers are blue to light purple. The fruit is subglobose, about 5 mm in diameter, yellow-green becoming black.

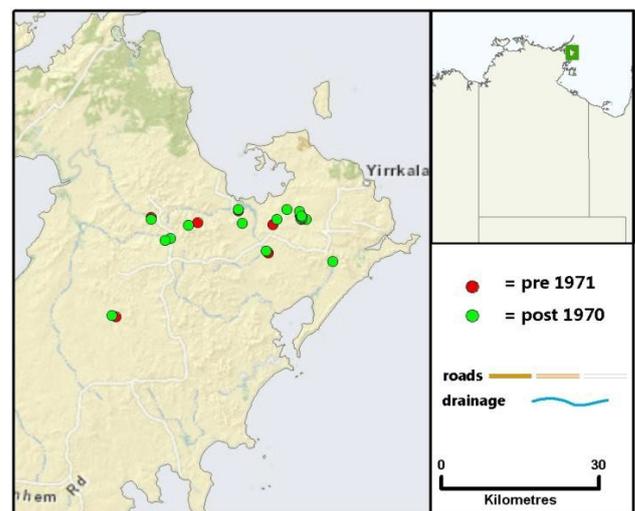
Flowering: February.

Fruiting: February, October.

### Distribution

This species is found in the Northern Territory (NT), Queensland, South-east Asia and New Guinea (Whiffin 1990). In the NT it is known from approximately six localities in north-east Arnhem Land (Holtze 2011). As most collections were made prior to GPS being available, the exact number of localities is difficult to determine. However, its presence has been confirmed at the Latram River, Giddy River and two of its tributaries as well as at two upper tributaries of the Cato River. It is known to extend along about 4 km of stream bank but populations are sparse and scattered.

*Conservation reserves where reported:*  
None.



Known locations of *Pternandra coerulescens*

### Ecology

This species has been recorded from spring-fed rainforest, the banks of spring fed streams and in riparian forests.

### Conservation assessment

In the NT, it is classified as **Vulnerable** (under criteria D1+2) based on:

- a restricted area of occupancy (estimated to be < 20 km<sup>2</sup>); and
- a small population size (estimated to be <1 000 individuals).

Recent survey of selected riparian habitat in Arnhem Land during December 2007 located an additional subpopulation on a tributary of

the Giddy River and extended the known area of occupancy of several other subpopulations.

### **Threatening processes**

There are potential threats from cyclonic events and changes to hydrology due to water extraction to supply growing local domestic and industrial uses and in the longer term, potential mining of the 'Cato Plateau'. The impact of current fire regimes and feral animal activity is largely unknown. Plants along some streams appear to be subject to scorching from Dry season fires and occur in a narrow zone close to the water. In other places plants are in small pockets of wet habitat resistant to fire.

### **Conservation objectives and management**

Surveys are required to determine if further populations exist and to document and monitor the status of known populations.

### **Compiled by**

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### **References**

Holtze (2011). NT Herbarium collection database.  
NRETAS, Darwin.  
Whiffin, T. (1990). Melastomataceae. Flora of  
Australia 18, 243-255.