

# Threatened Species of the Northern Territory

## *Amperea spicata*

### Airy Shaw (EUPHORBIACEAE)

#### Conservation status

Australia: Not listed

Northern Territory: Vulnerable

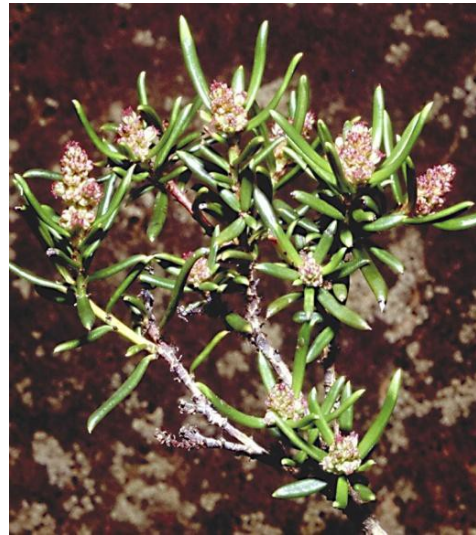


Photo: D. Albrecht

#### Description

*Amperea spicata* is a small shrub to about 30 cm high. The leaves are concentrated towards the end of the branchlets, linear to oblanceolate with strongly recurved margins, 7-33 mm long and 0.8-2 mm wide, glabrous above and inconspicuously papillose below. Male and female flowers are separate but occur on the same plant, each with four to five small perianth segments to 2 mm long. Fruit is a glabrous capsule 1.5-2.5 mm long and wide.

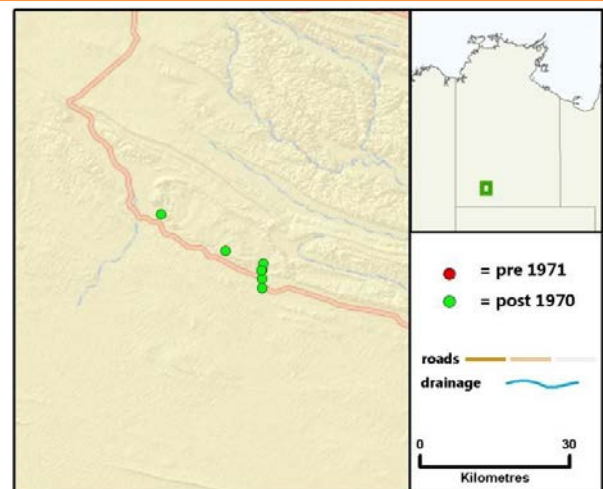
Flowering: recorded in June and August.

Fruiting: recorded in October.

#### Distribution

*Amperea spicata* is endemic to the Northern Territory (NT) where it is known only from Watarrka National Park. The species appears to be restricted to the catchments of Stokes and Kathlene Creeks (Holtze 2010).

*Conservation reserves where reported:*  
Watarrka National Park.



Known locations of *Amperea spicata*

#### Ecology

*Amperea spicata* occurs in the deeply incised (gorge) sections of creeks where it is confined to rock crevices on sheltered sandstone cliffs.

#### Conservation assessment

*Amperea spicata* is classified in the NT as **Vulnerable** (under criterion D2) based on:

- a very restricted area of occupancy consisting of less than 10 km of cliff-line and only two locations which are less than ten kilometres apart; and

- threats from stochastic events and weed invasion that are capable, within a short time period in an uncertain future, of pushing the species to Endangered.

### Threatening processes

Imminent threats have not been documented. The very restricted area of occupancy and small number of locations however render the species prone to the effects of stochastic events such as disease, an extended drought due to climate change or catastrophic fire. Further, Buffel Grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) is a highly competitive environmental weed and occurs in both the Stokes and Kathleen catchments. Buffel Grass can occur in crevices on cliffs and if it gets established it could compete with *Amperea spicata*.

### Conservation objectives and management

Further survey is required to determine the full extent of both populations. Establishment of monitoring plots would assist in gathering data on longevity of individuals, fire response, recruitment events and changes in population structure over time. The establishment of Buffel Grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) in suitable habitat for *Amperea spicata* should also be monitored and control undertaken if necessary. Although *Amperea spicata* would appear to occur in sites naturally protected from fire, exceptional fire events could impact some plants and further consideration needs to be given to fire management.

### Compiled by

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[updated December 2012]

### References

- Henderson, R.J.F. (1992) Studies in Euphorbiaceae A.L.Juss., sens. lat. I. A revision of *Amperea* Adr. Juss. (Acalyphoideae Ascherson, Ampereae Muell. Arg.) *Aust. J. Bot.* 5: 1-27.
- HOLTZE 2010. Northern Territory Herbarium (DNA) collections database.