

Threatened species of the Northern Territory

Freycinetia excelsa

Conservation status

Australia: Not listed

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Northern Territory: Vulnerable

Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976

Description

Freycinetia excelsa is a small woody climber with stems to 7-8 mm in diameter. The leaf auricles each have a rounded apex and no distinct lobe. The bracts are orange to red. The male spikes are yellow to cream-brown; and fruit strawberry-red¹.

Fruiting: February.



Credit: K. Brennan

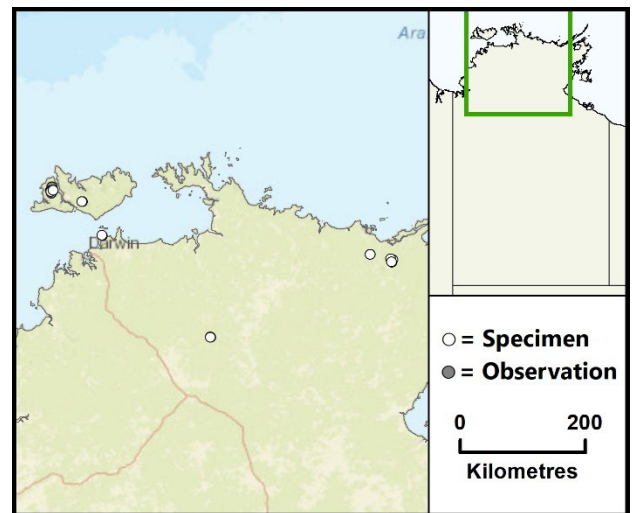


Credit: A. Small

Distribution

This species is known from Australia and New Guinea. In the Northern Territory (NT), it has been recorded from 16 discrete rainforest patches from Bathurst Island to the Arafura Swamp².

NT conservation reserves where reported:
Kakadu National Park.



Caption: Known locations of *Freycinetia excelsa* in the NT (nrmmaps.nt.gov.au)

Ecology

It occurs in wet lowland rainforest and spring-fed rainforests in sandstone gullies³.

Threatening processes

The impact of feral animals on this species is unknown but pigs in large numbers are likely to affect recruitment either through disturbance or browsing. Plants on the Tiwi Islands could be susceptible to severe cyclonic events. This species has not been collected while reproductive, despite re-survey throughout the year (K. Brennan *pers. comm.*). The potential threats to the species and its habitat are excessive ground water drawdown, coupled with grassy weed invasion and resulting intensified fire regimes following intensification of land use in adjacent areas.

One site is located near Glyde Point, near an area proposed as industrial estate and may be at risk. Detectability of sterile plants may be low due to the dense layer of the climbing fern *Stenochlaena palustris* covering the same tree-trunk substrate as utilised by *Freycinetia*.

Conservation objectives and management

A Recovery Plan for the threatened plants of the Tiwi Islands has been released and many actions have been implemented⁴.

Research and further surveys are required to establish the status of these populations, the distribution of the species and the impact of feral animals. Conservation of the Glyde Point population is recommended. A monitoring program should be established for at least some populations.

References

¹ Stone, B.C. 1982. The Australian species of *Freycinetia* (Pandanaceae). *Brunonia* 5, 79-94.

² Department of Land Resource Management 2015 Tiwi Island Economic Development - Bio-Physical Resources of North East Bathurst Island (Technical Report). Technical

Report Number 12/2014/D Department of Land Resource Management, Darwin, Northern Territory.

³ Woinarski, J., Brennan, K., Cowie, I., Kerrigan, R., and Hempel, C. 2003. *Biodiversity conservation on the Tiwi islands, Northern Territory. Part 1. Plants and environments*. 144 pp. (Department of Infrastructure Planning and Environment, Darwin.)

⁴ Liddle D.T. and Elliott L.P., 2008. *Tiwi Island threatened plants 2006 to 2008: field survey, population monitoring including establishment of a program to investigate the impact of pigs, and weed control*. Report to Natural Resource Management Board (NT), NHT Project 2005/142, Northern Territory Government Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport, Palmerston.