

# Silky Eremophila

E n d a n g e r e d F l o r a o f W e s t e r n A u s t r a l i a

**If you think you've seen this plant, please call either CALM's Moora District on (08) 9652 1911 or Geraldton District (08) 9921 5955.**

Charles Gardner first collected the silky eremophila (*Eremophila nivea*) from near Three Springs in 1960. At that time the species appeared to be relatively common and widespread throughout the Three Springs area but extensive clearing has now reduced its habitat to a few small areas of remnant bushland between Three Springs, Morawa and Perenjori.

Described by Bob Chinnock in 1986, silky eremophila is a densely hairy shrub 1 to 2 m high with greyish-white leaves 1 to 2 cm long by 1.5 to 3.5 mm wide and the flowers are variably blue, purple or violet.

Silky eremophila is found on undulating plains and disturbed road verges, growing in sandy-clay and brown clay-loam with York gum, *Eucalyptus loxophleba*, *Melaleuca* and *Acacia* species. Flowering is from August to October.

Although silky eremophila is a popular ornamental garden plant it is rare in the wild and is currently ranked as Critically Endangered.

CALM, through the Moora and Geraldton Districts Threatened Flora Recovery Teams, have been addressing the most threatening factors affecting its survival in the wild (see overleaf).

Historically, silky eremophila has been found on nine occasions but is currently known from six living populations. CALM is keen to know of any other populations.

If unable to contact either District offices, on the above numbers, please contact CALM's Wildlife Branch on (08) 9334 0422.



A close-up of the beautiful lilac flowers of silky eremophila. Photo – A. Brown



Note the distinctive silvery colouration of the plant. Photo – A. Brown

## Recovery of a Species



CALM is committed to ensuring that Critically Endangered taxa are conserved. This is done through the preparation of a Recovery Plan (RP) or Interim Recovery Plan (IRP), which outlines the recovery actions that are required to urgently address those threatening processes most affecting the ongoing survival of threatened species in the wild and begin the recovery process.

IRPs are prepared by CALM and implemented by Regional or District Recovery teams consisting of representatives from CALM, Kings Park and Botanic Gardens, community groups, private landowners, local Shires and various government organisations.

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Recovery actions that have been implemented, or are progressively being implemented, to protect the species include:

## Protection from current threats;

These include the erection of signs that mark the site of each population, reducing grazing pressure by rabbits and from stock through fencing, the control of introduced weeds, regular monitoring of the health of each population, rehabilitation with native species to reduce effects of salinity and direct seeding.

## Protection from future threats;

The collection of seed, the maintenance of live plants away from the wild (ie. in botanical gardens), the development of a fire protection plan to protect the species from inappropriate fire regimes, the maintenance of Dieback hygiene and the maintenance of buffers of natural vegetation around populations of the silky eremophila; ensuring that relevant authorities, land owners and CALM personnel are aware of its presence and the need to protect it, and that all are familiar with the threatening processes identified in the Interim Recovery Plan, conducting further surveys, researching the biology and ecology of the silky eremophila and enhancing plant numbers by removal of weeds or some other limiting factor or by direct propagation and translocation techniques.



Habitat of the silky eremophila, along creeks and drainage lines, under york gums. Photo – L.Monks.

IRPs will be deemed a success if essential recovery actions have been implemented and identified threatening processes have been removed within three years of its approval.



Several populations of silky eremophila are confined to narrow road reserves. Photo – A. Brown.