



THREATENED SPECIES AND COMMUNITIES OF THE ACT

Button Wrinklewort (*Rutidosia leptorrhynchoides*)

An endangered species

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The Button Wrinklewort is a slender perennial wildflower that grows to about 30 cm in height, branching mainly at the base. The leaves are narrow, dark green ageing to yellow-green and up to 3.5 cm long and 1.5 mm wide, with rolled edges concealing the undersides. The stems usually die back in late summer or autumn and the new basal leaves appear by early winter. The species has bright yellow button flowers (2 cm wide) from December to April.



The species appears to have been formerly widespread in south-eastern New South Wales and across the western plains of Victoria. It has a disjunct distribution and is known from 17 populations in the ACT region (ten within the ACT, six near Queanbeyan and one near Goulburn (NSW)) and nine in Victoria. Current populations range in size from five to approximately 95,000 plants. These are often restricted to small, scattered refugia that have escaped grazing, ploughing and the application of fertilisers, for example, road margins, railway easements and cemeteries.

In the ACT, the Button Wrinklewort occurs on the margins of open stands of Yellow Box–Red Gum Grassy Woodland with a ground layer of various native grasses and other forbs, and extends into Natural Temperate Grassland. Soils are usually shallow stony red-brown clay loams. Occasionally, Apple Box (*Eucalyptus bridgesiana*) is also present.

CONSERVATION THREATS

Threats to the populations of *Rutidosia leptorrhynchoides* in the ACT and region are primarily:

- habitat loss or degradation;
- competition with other vegetation, including weeds;
- heavy grazing; and
- erosion of genetic diversity and increased inbreeding.

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CONSERVATION ACTION

Actions to assist with the conservation of the species in the ACT include:

- Maintaining alertness to the possible presence of the species while conducting surveys in appropriate habitat.
- Reviewing research on how genetic variation influence the viability of small populations and its application to the conservation management of this species.
- Maintaining a monitoring program for the species with particular attention to seedling establishment and inspection for site damage.
- Endeavouring to ensure that land uses adjacent to sites supporting the species are compatible with conservation objectives to minimise any adverse impacts.
- Developing an appropriate management regime for each site.
- Compiling and distributing management guidelines and maintaining contact with land managers responsible for areas on which populations of the species occur.

- Exploring possibilities for horticultural effort being applied as a conservation measure for the species.
- Encouraging community groups to assist in the conservation of native grasslands and their component species.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The primary source of information for this information sheet is the ACT Lowland Native Grassland Conservation Strategy—Action Plan No. 28, where a full bibliography is available.

Action plans are available online at www.environment.act.gov.au or by calling Canberra Connect on 13 22 81.

Acknowledgement

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