



## THREATENED SPECIES AND COMMUNITIES OF THE ACT

## Small Purple Pea (*Swainsona recta*)

An endangered species

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The Small Purple Pea (*Swainsona recta*) is a slender, erect perennial plant producing several rigid stems 20–30 cm high and with a woody root. The leaves are pinnate, 5–7 cm long. The purple or bluish flowers are 5–6 mm long, borne in racemes (spikes). The pods are rounded-oblong, 7–11 mm long and 4–6 mm wide, hairless except along the suture and base.



The species is found in open woodland with a native grassy understorey dominated by Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*), Poa Tussock (*Poa sieberiana* var. *sieberiana*) or speargrasses.

Once relatively widespread, the known range of the species has reduced drastically over the past 60 years and it is now fragmented into two clusters of populations, one in central eastern NSW (between Wellington and Mudgee) and the other in the Canberra-Williamsdale district.

The largest ACT population is on Mt Taylor. Smaller populations exist in suburban Kambah and Aranda bushland. A single plant has been recorded on the verge of Long Gully Road (Isaacs Ridge) but recent surveys have failed to find it. There is also a scattered population along the Williamsdale-Tralee railway easement (NSW).

### CONSERVATION THREATS

Throughout the local region the Small Purple Pea is at risk from habitat loss and degradation due to changes to land management, urban development, changes in grazing pressures and competition from invading weeds and understorey species that flourish under prevailing fire frequencies or biomass reduction programs. The small and fragmented nature of ACT populations makes each susceptible to destruction from a single catastrophic event.

### SPECIFIC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVE

Maintain viable populations of the Small Purple Pea as a component of the indigenous biological resources of the ACT and as a contribution to the regional and national conservation of the species.

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## CONSERVATION ACTIONS

- Continued surveillance for the possible presence of the species at other locations.
- Maintenance of monitoring programs.
- Effective management to maintain or increase the size of ACT populations.
- Participation in efforts to increase knowledge of the biology and conservation requirements of the species for improved management.
- Maintenance of collections of viable seed at the National Botanic Gardens Herbarium.
- Development of management plans and implementation timetables for the three sites in the ACT.
- Participation in the National Recovery Team for the species.
- Liaison with rural lessees and maintenance crews working along the Tralee/Williamsdale railway and road easement.

### HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

The primary source of information for this Information Sheet is the ACT Lowland Woodland Conservation Strategy—Action Plan No. 27 where a full bibliography is available. Action Plans are available from the Environment ACT Website: [www.environment.act.gov.au](http://www.environment.act.gov.au) or the Arts, Heritage and Environment Information Centre at 12 Wattle Street, Lyneham ACT.

### Acknowledgement

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