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NOT FOR LOAN

Swamp Starflower

Endangered Flora of Western Australia

**If you think you've seen this plant, please call
CALM Perth District on (08) 9405 0700**

Commonly known as swamp starflower, *Calytrix breviseta* subsp. *breviseta* is a small shrub to 40 cm tall.

Attractive star-shaped, purple-blue flowers are produced in September and October, each with numerous stamens and large whisker-like projections (called awns).

Found growing in winter-wet, sandy clay soils near the base of the Darling Scarp, this subspecies differs from *Calytrix breviseta* subsp. *stipulosa* in that it has longer, narrow leaves and longer petals.

Government Botanist James Drummond first discovered swamp starflower sometime before 1837. It was then recorded from the Gosnells and Bellvue areas in 1901 and 1915, respectively, but was later thought to have become extinct due to the extensive clearing of its habitat. The plant was rediscovered in 1990, following extensive surveys of suitable habitat in the Perth area during the preparation of the Metropolitan Wildlife Management Program for flora.

Swamp starflower was ranked as Critically Endangered in 1995, and CALM has set up the Swan Region Threatened Flora Recovery Team to co-ordinate recovery actions addressing the most threatening processes affecting its survival in the wild. (See overleaf.)

Threats include weeds, limited suitable habitat, inappropriate fire regimes, and dieback.

Swamp starflower is recorded from just two locations and we are eager to know of any others.

If unable to contact the District office on the above number, please phone CALM's Wildlife Branch on (08) 9334 0422.



Closeup of flowers illustrating the numerous stamens and whisker-like projections typical of the genus *Calytrix*. Photo – A. Brown



Swamp starflower in full flower in mid September. Photo – E. Holland

Recovery of a Species



CALM is committed to ensuring that Critically Endangered taxa do not become extinct in the wild. 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 taxa 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 Garden, community groups, private landowners, local Shires and various government organisations.

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Swamp Starflower

Essential recovery actions that have been implemented to protect the subspecies include:

Protection from current threats: The erection of signs that mark the site of each population; the control of introduced weeds; the development of a fire protection plan; the maintenance of dieback hygiene; and regular monitoring of the health of each population.

Protection from future threats: Ensuring that relevant authorities, land owners and CALM personnel are aware of the species and the need to protect it; and that all are familiar with the threatening processes identified in the Interim Recovery Plan (IRP).

Desirable recovery actions, which are progressively being implemented, include:

The collection of seed; the maintenance of live plants away from the wild (i.e. in botanical gardens); the maintenance of buffers of natural vegetation around populations of the swamp starflower; ensuring that land containing the largest population is set aside as a nature reserve; conducting further surveys; researching the biology and ecology of the swamp starflower; and enhancing plant numbers by removal of weeds, amelioration of some other limiting factor, or by direct propagation and translocation techniques.

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



A two year old seedling flowering for the first time. Photo – A. Brown



Swamp starflower is found in winter-wet areas that begin to dry out as the species begins flowering. Photo – Leonie Monks

