

Australina pusilla ssp. *muelleri*



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R. Schahinger

FAMILY: URTICACEAE

BOTANICAL NAME: *Australina pusilla* ssp. *muelleri* (Wedd.) Friis & Wilmot-Dear in Friis et al., *Nord. J. Bot.* 7: 126 (1987)

COMMON NAME: Shade nettle

COMMONWEALTH STATUS: (*EPBC Act*)
Not Listed

TASMANIAN STATUS: (*TSP Act*) rare

Description

A loosely branched perennial herb with stems creeping at the base, becoming erect and sloping upwards (to 60 cm tall). **Leaves:** Elliptic to ovate in shape, 1.5–5.0 cm long with 4–6 rounded teeth on each side; dark green and thinly-textured, both surfaces with scattered hairs. **Flowers:** The insignificant flowers are clustered in the leaf axils and are either male or female. They are situated on semi-succulent flowering stems. Flowering is from November to February. **Fruit:** The fruit is oval and c. 1.5 mm long. **Confusing species:** This subspecies can be distinguished from *Australina pusilla* ssp. *pusilla* by its ascending branches and larger leaves (leaves are 0.4 to 0.8 cm long in *Australina pusilla* ssp. *pusilla*) (description based on Curtis 1967, Friis & Wilmot-Dear 1988, and Entwisle & Gebauer 1996). **This species was previously known as *Australina muelleri*.**

Distribution and Habitat

On the mainland this species occurs in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria, being relatively common in the latter state (Entwisle & Gebauer 1996). In Tasmania, it is known from the southern flanks of Mount Wellington in deeply shaded gullies within wet eucalypt forest, and from King Island where it grows in association with *Australina pusilla* ssp. *pusilla* along stream flats in blackwood swamp forest.

Key Sites and Populations

Mount Wellington and near Sea Elephant River on King Island.

Known Reserves

Reserved in Wellington Park.

Ecology and Management

Barnes *et al.* (2002) suggests that areas where this species is encountered on King Island should be managed as stock-free zones due to the detrimental effects of trampling. Fire is also a potential threat due to the nature of its preferred habitat.

Conservation Status Assessment

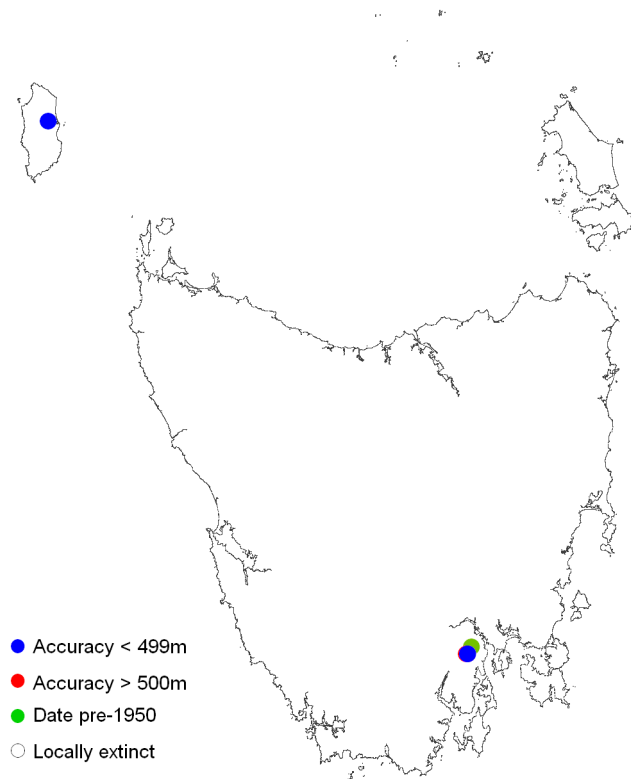
The species is currently known in Tasmania from only two small populations — uplisting to vulnerable may be warranted.

Further Information

- Barnes, RW, Duncan, F & Todd, CS 2002, *The Native Vegetation of King Island, Bass Strait*, Nature Conservation Report 02/6, Nature Conservation Branch, Resource Management & Conservation Division, Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, Hobart.
- Curtis, WM 1967, *The Student's Flora of Tasmania, Part 3*, Government Printer, Tasmania.
- Entwisle, TJ & Gebauer, R 1996, *Urticaceae*. In *Flora of Victoria, Volume 3* (Eds NG Walsh & DB Foreman), Inkata Press, Melbourne.
- Friis, I & Wilmot-Dear, CM 1988, A revision of the tribe Forsskaoleae (Urticaceae). *Nordic Journal of Botany* 8: 25–59.

Tasmanian Distribution

(As per Threatened Species Section records, February 2008)



1:25 000 Map Sheets

Collinsvale, Longley, Sea Elephant.

Date last modified: 21/02/2008

View

<http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/threatenedspecieslists>

Contact details

Threatened Species Section, Department of Primary Industries and Water, GPO Box 44, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 7001. Phone (03) 6233 6556; fax (03) 6233 3477.

Permit

It is an offence to collect, disturb, damage or destroy this species unless under permit.