

Lobelia pratioides



Images by Richard Schahinger

FAMILY: CAMPANULACEAE

BOTANICAL NAME: *Lobelia pratioides*
Benth., *Fl. Austral.* 4: 131 (1868)

COMMON NAME: Poison lobelia

COMMONWEALTH STATUS (EPBC Act):
Not Listed

TASMANIAN STATUS (TSP Act): vulnerable

Description

Lobelia pratioides is a procumbent to weakly ascending perennial herb. Its stems are round in cross-section, usually have spreading hairs (at least on younger growth), and are sometimes zig-zagged; the stems root at the nodes to form loose mats, with erect leafy flowering stems to 10 cm long. Leaves are arranged alternately along the stems, often distichous: they are sessile or nearly so, narrowly elliptical to narrowly ovate and up to 15 mm long, with 3 to 5 small gland-tipped teeth on each side and a bluntly acute apex. Plants are usually dioecious, with male and female flowers on different plants. The flowers are solitary and are borne in the leaf axils on stalks as long as or longer than the leaves. Calyx 5-lobed, the lobes narrow-triangular, 2 to 3 mm long. Corolla pale blue or lilac, 8 to 9 mm long; corolla tube oblique and curved, slit to the base, two-lipped, the upper lip with two deeply separated lobes, the lower lip with three spreading lobes (the lobes oblong-lanceolate). The outer surface of the corolla is glabrous, while the inner surface of the tube is covered with short spreading hairs. Male flowers have bristles on the two shorter lower anthers, and very short or no hairs on the three longer upper anthers; stamens fused to corolla at its base. Flowering occurs between November and January. The fruit is an oval-shaped capsule about 5 mm long (description from Curtis 1963, Walsh & Entwisle 1999). **Confusing species:** *Lobelia irrigua* is similar but has a succulent fruit; *Lobelia anceps* (syn. *Lobelia alata*) has angled and narrowly winged stems.

Distribution and Habitat

On mainland Australia *Lobelia pratioides* occurs in New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria (Walsh & Entwisle 1999). In Tasmania most sites have been recorded in the Northern Midlands, with sites also known in the State's south, east and north, and a solitary collection from Flinders Island. The species grows in seasonally inundated to waterlogged soils at the margins of swamps, wetlands and drainage lines, and also in damp depressions within grassland and grassy woodland. Associated rare flora species include *Aphelia gracilis*, *Myriophyllum integrifolium*, *Stylidium despectum* and *Trithuria submersa*.



Plates 1 & 2. *Lobelia pratioides*: habit and habitat near Conara

Key Sites and Populations

Smiths Lagoon, Blanchards Creek, Diprose Lagoon, Hobart Airport.

Known Reserves

Freycinet National Park. Two subpopulations in the Northern Midlands occur on private land covered by conservation covenants under the Tasmanian *Nature Conservation Act 2002*.

Ecology and Management

Considerable areas of habitat for *Lobelia pratioides* in Tasmania's Northern Midlands and elsewhere are likely to have been lost to land clearance since European settlement. Potential threats to the species and its habitat include changes to local and broader hydrological processes, stock trampling, nutrient enrichment associated with stock and fertiliser application, and weed invasion. The species' diminutive stature means that the risk of inadvertent habitat destruction is high, as environmental impact assessments may not be conducted at optimal times for detection.

Conservation Status Assessment

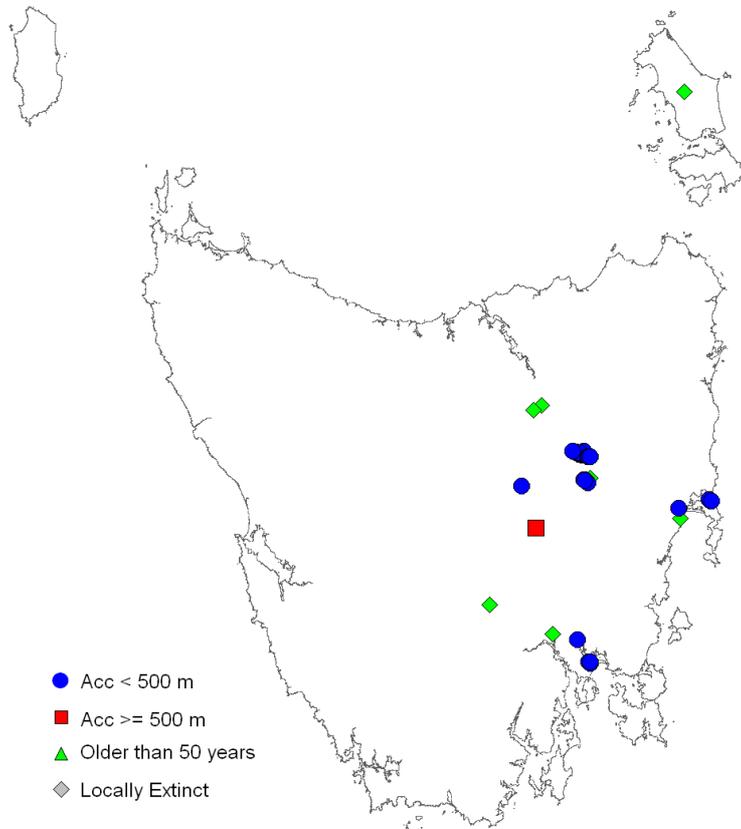
Lobelia pratioides was listed as vulnerable on the original schedules of the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*. Several new sites have been discovered in the interim and the species' reservation status has been improved (albeit in the Northern Midlands only). It is considered likely that additional sites will emerge if targeted surveys of potential habitat were undertaken, though in the first instance surveys of older sites are required to determine their status. A reassessment of the species' conservation status may be warranted in the wake of such surveys.

Further Information

- Curtis, W.M. (1963). *The Student's Flora of Tasmania, Part 3*. Government Printer, Tasmania.
- Walsh, N.G. & Entwisle, T.J. (1999). *Flora of Victoria. Volume 4. Dicotyledons: Cornaceae to Asteraceae*. Inkata Press, Melbourne.

Tasmanian Distribution

(As per Threatened Species & Marine Section records, December 2013)



1:25 000 Map Sheets

Campbell Town, Carlton, Cleveland, Conara, Cranbrook, Diamond, Friendly, Hamilton, Hobart, Interlaken, Jacobs, Leventhorpe, Longford, Millers, Richmond, Swansea, Tea Tree.

Date last modified: 23/12/2013

View

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

Contact details

Threatened Species and Marine Section, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water & Environment, GPO Box 44, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 7001. Phone (03) 6165 4340; fax (03) 6233 3477.

Permit

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