

Sicyos australis



Sicyos australis. L. Gilfedder.

FAMILY: CUCURBITACEAE

BOTANICAL NAME: *Sicyos australis*,
Endl., *Prodr. Fl. Norfolk* 67 (1833)

COMMON NAME: Star cucumber

COMMONWEALTH STATUS: (*EPBC Act*) Not Listed

TASMANIAN STATUS: (*TSP Act*) rare

Description

A scrambling herb between 1-4 metres with slender stems. **Leaves:** The leaves are on stalks between 2-3 cm long and the blades are broad, almost kidney-shaped with 5-7 lobes, the middle being the longest. The blades are between 6-8 cm long and 4-5 cm wide. The margins are irregularly toothed and both surfaces are somewhat rough to the touch and with short bristles. **Flowers:** The flowers are greenish and between 5-7 mm in diameter. They are either male or female and often arise separately from the same leaf axil (where the stem meets the leaf). The male flowers are arranged in a short succession along the stem, usually the oldest flower is at the base. The male flowers have an inflorescence stalk that is longer than the leaf. The female flowers are in small dense clusters on short inflorescence stalks. Flowering is from December to May (Flora of Victoria). **Fruit:** The fruit is oval and approximately 1 mm long and leathery in texture. It is densely covered in barbed prickles (description from Curtis 1963). **This species was previously known as *Sicyos angulata*.**

Distribution and Habitat

On the mainland this species occurs in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. *Sicyos australis* is also found in New Zealand, many of the islands in the Pacific and along the coasts of North and South America. Historical records were collected from the eastern coastline of Flinders Island, however this species is now only known from Inner Sister Island. Here it occurs on rocky limestone ground with coastal shrubbery. It is also found in coastal grasslands on alkaline sand (Curtis 1963, Harris *et al.* 2001).

Key Sites and Populations

Inner Sister Island is the key site for *Sicyos australis*.

Known Reserves

Reserved in the Sister Island Conservation Area.

Ecology and Management

In cultivation, the seedlings of this species are very susceptible to grazing by the introduced garden snail (*Helix aspera*) (Harris *et al.* 2001).

Conservation Status Assessment

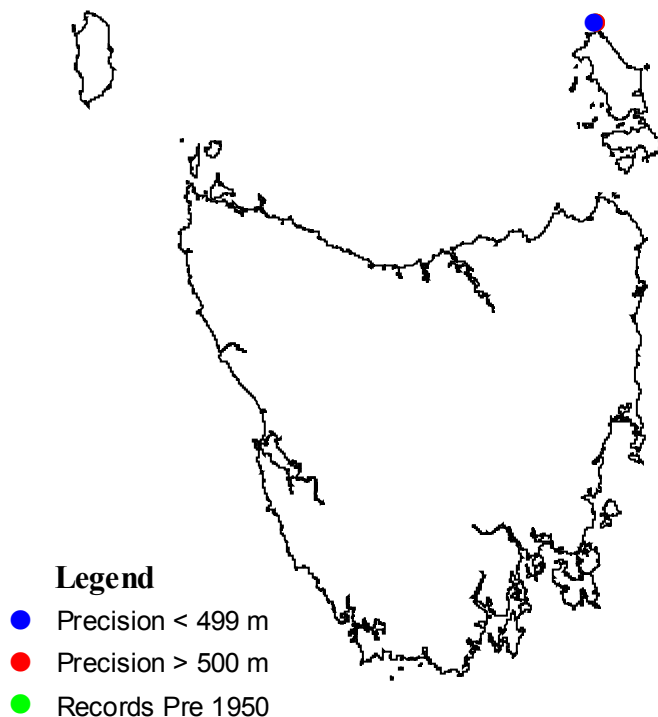
Reassessment of *Sicyos australis* is required due to the low number of populations and restricted distribution.

Further Information

- Curtis, WM 1963, *The Student's Flora of Tasmania*, Part 2, Government Printer, Hobart.
- Harris, S, Buchanan, A & Connolly, A 2001, *One Hundred Islands: The Flora of the Outer Furneaux*, Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, Hobart.
- Kirkpatrick, JB 1991, *Tasmanian Native Bush: A Management Handbook*, Tasmanian Environment Centre, Hobart.

Tasmanian Distribution

(As per Threatened Species Unit records, June 2003)



1:25 000 Map Sheets

Sister.

Date last modified: 03/09/03