

Calystegia sepium



FAMILY: CONVOLVULACEAE

BOTANICAL NAME: *Calystegia sepium*, (L.)
R.Br., *Prodr.* 483 (1810)

COMMON NAME: Great bindweed

COMMONWEALTH STATUS: (*EPBC Act*)
Not Listed

TASMANIAN STATUS: (*TSP Act*) rare

Calystegia sepium. R. Schahinger.

Description

A robust, native, perennial species that is found climbing 3-4 metres over supporting vegetation. **Underground parts:** This species has far-reaching underground horizontal stems. **Stems:** The horizontal stems have roots and shoots; the shoots are slender and climb over supporting plants. They twine in a counter-clockwise direction. **Leaves:** The leaves are arranged alternately along the stem and are hairless with blades shaped like the head of an arrow or heart-shaped. The leaves are usually 4-10 cm long, however they are sometimes larger. The point is tapered and the stalk is usually shorter than the blade. **Flowers:** The showy flowers are funnel-shaped, between 4-6 cm long and white (sometimes tinged with pink). They open during the day, but close at night. This species has a pair of large scale-like leaves (bracteoles) that overlap the base of the flower. Flowering during summer. **Fruit:** The fruit is a capsule. Herbarium specimens have been collected from January to March.

Confusing species: *Calystegia silvatica* is an introduced species that is similar to *Calystegia sepium*. It is found in the same region and in some cases co-occurs with *Calystegia sepium*. The bracteoles of *Calystegia sepium* tend to be a lot smaller and are not inflated and barely overlap. Also, *Calystegia sepium* has leaves that taper into a point, whilst *Calystegia silvatica* has blunt to round leaf tips (description from Curtis 1967, Threatened Species Unit 2002).



Calystegia sepium habitat.
R. Schahinger.

Distribution and Habitat

Calystegia sepium is a riparian species that is widespread throughout temperate Australia. It is naturalised in New Zealand and can be found in temperate regions of both hemispheres (Walsh & Entwistle 1999). In Tasmania, this species has been recorded from riverbanks and the margins of forests in the north of the State around the Tamar region. Here *Calystegia sepium* is often found twining around the common reed (*Phragmites australis*) or paperbark (*Melaleuca ericifolia*). The species is also known from Beechford, where it inhabits the outlet of a road culvert on a short drainage line leading down to the estuary.

Key Sites and Populations

Calystegia sepium was presumed extinct in Tasmania until March 2001, when a specimen was collected from the Tamar River Reserve. This species is locally abundant around the Tamar River between Launceston and the Tamar Island Wildlife Sanctuary. The number of mature individuals is estimated at >100 000. *Calystegia sepium* occupies an area of 120-150 hectares and the extent of occurrence is approximately 16 kilometres (Schahinger 2002). The specimens from the Pitcher Parade Reserve near Prospect have been introduced as a result of a revegetation program conducted by the Launceston City Council. Reeds from Tamar Island were transported, hence the occurrence of *Calystegia sepium* at this new site (Schahinger 2002).

In 2005 a new site for *Calystegia sepium* was confirmed from Beechford. This extends the range eastwards from the previously known distribution in the Tamar valley. Only one small patch (at least 2x 5m) was sited at the time. The plant/s were climbing among blackberries and getting the upper hand. Immediately adjacent is an area of slashed weeds running along the seaward side of the foreshore road.

Known Reserves

Calystegia sepium is found within the Tamar River Reserve. The greater proportion of the species distribution is found within this reserve (Schahinger 2002).

Ecology and Management

The habitat of this species has been dramatically affected due to land use practices post European settlement. The current areas occupied by *Calystegia sepium* are in poor condition and are subject to the threats of exotic weed invasion. Native vegetation clearance is also a threat to those populations on unreserved land (Schahinger 2002). This species is a known coloniser of waste areas and may regenerate prolifically after fire (Gray & Knight 2001, Schahinger 2002).

At the Beechford site there is a risk of this plant being affected by weed control works by the council and also the community members that are interested in rehabilitating this area (T. Rudman pers comm.).

Conservation Status Assessment

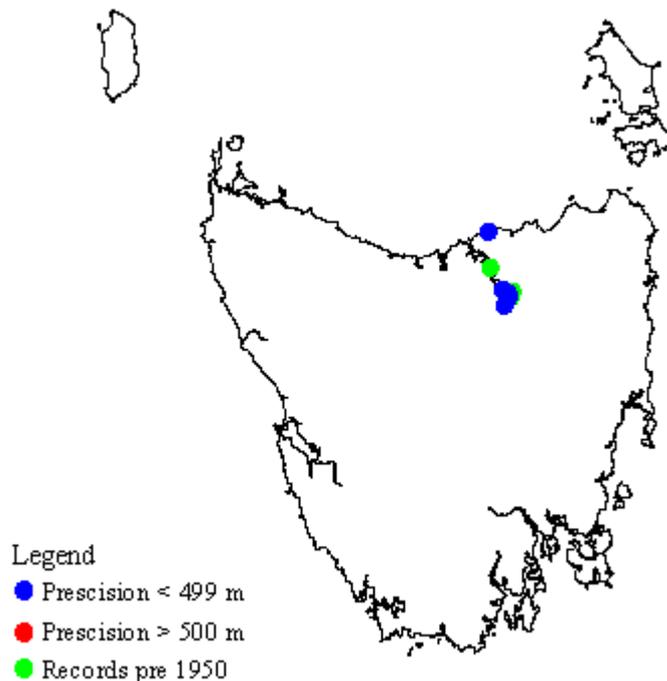
Calystegia sepium was previously listed as endangered. It is now listed as rare.

Further Information

- Curtis, WM 1967, *The Student's Flora of Tasmania*, Part 3, Government Printer, Hobart.
- Galbraith, J 1977, *Guide to the Wild Flowers of South East Australia*, Collins, London.
- Gray, M & Knight, J eds 2001, *Flora of Melbourne: A Guide to the Indigenous Plants of the Greater Melbourne Area*, Hyland House Publishing, Melbourne.
- Schahinger, R 2002, *Nomination for listing of Calystegia sepium under the Tasmanian Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*, Threatened Species Unit, Department of Primary Industries, Water & Environment, Hobart.
- Threatened Species Unit 2002, *Have You Seen This Native Plant? Calystegia sepium Fact Sheet*, Department of Primary Industries, Water & Environment, Hobart
- Walsh, NG & Entwistle, TJ eds 1999, *Flora of Victoria*, Volume 4, Inkata Press, Melbourne.

Tasmanian Distribution

(As per Threatened Species Unit records, April 2005)



1:25 000 Map Sheets

Beaconsfield, Launceston, Low Head, Prospect.

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