

Colobanthus pulvinatus



Colobanthus pulvinatus. C. Totterdell
(permission from ANBG web site)

FAMILY: CARYOPHYLLACEAE

BOTANICAL NAME: *Colobanthus pulvinatus*,
F.Muell., *Trans. Phil. Soc. Vict.* 1: 101 (1855)

COMMON NAME: Cushion colobanth

COMMONWEALTH STATUS: (*EPBC Act*)
Not Listed

TASMANIAN STATUS: (*TSP Act*) rare

Description

A compact, hairless cushion plant approximately 2-10 cm in diameter. **Leaves:** The leaves are stiff, spreading and narrow-triangular in shape. They are between 2-4 mm long and channelled on the upper leaf surface with sharp pointed tips. The leaf margins and midrib on the lower leaf surfaces are thickened and very obvious when dried. **Flowers:** The flowers are solitary at the ends of the branches. The outer parts of the flower are in 5 parts and cup-shaped. **Fruit:** The fruit is an oval capsule between 2-3 mm long and approximately 1.5 mm wide. The fruit has 5-6 openings (valves). The seeds are red-brown, shiny and between 0.7-0.8 mm long and 0.4-0.5 mm wide (description from Costin *et al.* 2000, Kirkpatrick 1997). Herbarium specimens have been collected from November to March.

Distribution and Habitat

On the mainland this species is found on Mt Kosciusko (New South Wales). In Tasmania, *Colobanthus pulvinatus* is restricted to fjaeldmark on mountains in the south of the State (description from Kirkpatrick 1997).

Key Sites and Populations

Key sites for this species include the Southern Ranges (Moonlight Ridge) and the summit of Mt Ossa and Frenchman's Cap.

Known Reserves

Reserved in the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park, Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park and the Southwest National Park.

Ecology and Management

Colobanthus pulvinatus often occurs on exposed ridges with little soil and an abundance of fractured rock. These areas are unlikely to be covered by snow during the winter months due to the prevailing westerly winds. Therefore, in winter, plants such as *Colobanthus pulvinatus* are exposed to extremely low temperatures and harsh conditions. Conversely, in summer the top layer of soil reaches very warm temperatures and soil moisture is limited. Very few species can tolerate this kind of environment and this is why fjeldmark habitat is sparsely vegetated.

Conservation Status Assessment

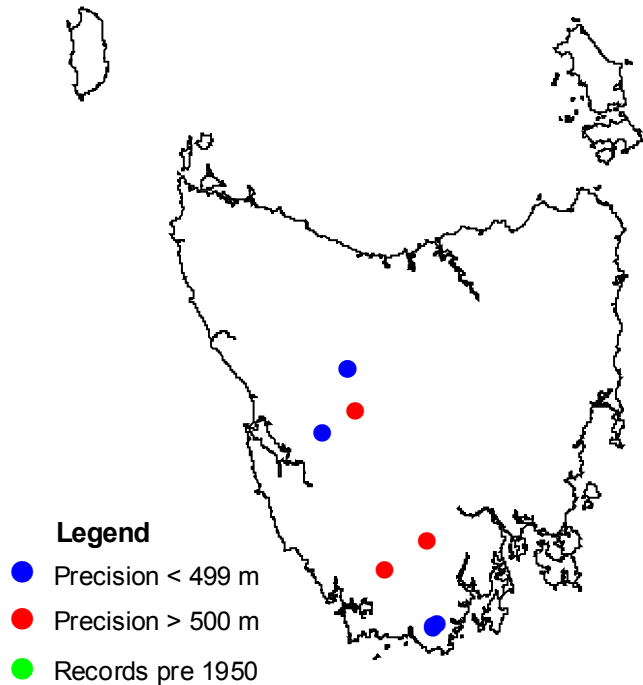
There is no immediate need for reassessment of *Colobanthus pulvinatus*.

Further Information

- Costin, A, Gray, M, Todderdell, C & Wimbush, D 2000, *Kosciuszko Alpine Flora*, second edition, CSIRO Publishing, Sydney.
- Kirkpatrick, JB 1997, *Alpine Tasmania*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Tasmanian Distribution

(As per Threatened Species Unit records, June 2003)



1:25 000 Map Sheets

Achilles, Leprena, Nevada, Precipitous, Razorback, Rufus, Vera.

Date last modified: 03/09/03