

Pultenaea sericea



Pultenaea sericea.
Tasmanian Herbarium specimen.

FAMILY: FABACEAE

BOTANICAL NAME: *Pultenaea sericea*,
(Benth.) Corrick, *Muelleria* 8(3): 392 (1995)

COMMON NAME: Chaffy bush pea

COMMONWEALTH STATUS: (*EPBC Act*)
Not Listed

TASMANIAN STATUS: (*TSP Act*)
vulnerable

Description

An undershrub with a stout tap root that is branched from the base. The branches are slender and wiry, spreading horizontally or sloping upward (between 20-80 cm long). The branches are covered with silky hairs. **Leaves:** The leaves are between 1-2 cm long, narrow, pointed and flat with an indented midrib and margins that are bent backwards. The upper surfaces are hairless, however the lower surfaces are covered in small silky hairs. The base narrows into a short stalk. The outgrowths at the base of the leaf-stalk (stipules) are obvious in the young leaves and more than half as long as the leaf. They are brown but soon wilt and fade in colour. **Flowers:** The flowers are borne in short, dense racemes (succession of flowers along stem, oldest flower at base) or heads that are situated at the ends of the branches. Each flower is on a short stalk with a bract (leaf-like structure) at the base. The flowers are between 8-10 mm long. The petals are yellow, however the lowest pea flower is dark yellow or brownish. Flowering is from October to November (Flora of Victoria). **Fruit:** The fruit is a flattened pod that is covered in silky hairs. The pod is more than twice the length of the outer whorl of floral parts (calyx) (description from Curtis & Morris 1975). Herbarium specimens have been collected in October and November. **This species was previously known as *Pultenaea paleacea* var. *sericea*.**

Distribution and Habitat

On the mainland this species occurs in East Gippsland, South Gippsland and in the region surrounding Melbourne. In Tasmania, *Pultenaea sericea* is found mainly near the coast in the north-east of the State in sandy to clayey soils in damp lowland heath (Curtis & Morris 1975).



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Key Sites and Populations

The known populations of this species have been recorded from Bridport, Croppies Point (in the Waterhouse Protected Area) and Big Waterhouse Lake (also in reserve). The sites are by no means extensive. The number of individuals is low, with less than 100 plants at two of the sites. There are no estimates of individuals from the Croppies Point population (Lynch 1993).

Known Reserves

This species is reserved in the Waterhouse Conservation Area.

Ecology and Management

Little is known regarding the ecology of *Pultenaea sericea*. Although the habitats and communities of this species are extensive and at present heathy, long term management is difficult as they are situated in areas with conflicting land use. Infection from root rot (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) is possible. Barker (1996) indicates that much of the suitable habitat for this species has probably been cleared for pasture.

The population situated within the Bridport Wildflower Reserve may be under threat from competition by *Callitris rhomboidea*. The Oyster Bay pines have escaped from gardens and have grown into dense thickets that are advancing on the population of *Pultenaea sericea*.

Bees are the most likely pollination vector for this species (A. Hingston pers. comm.).

Conservation Status Assessment

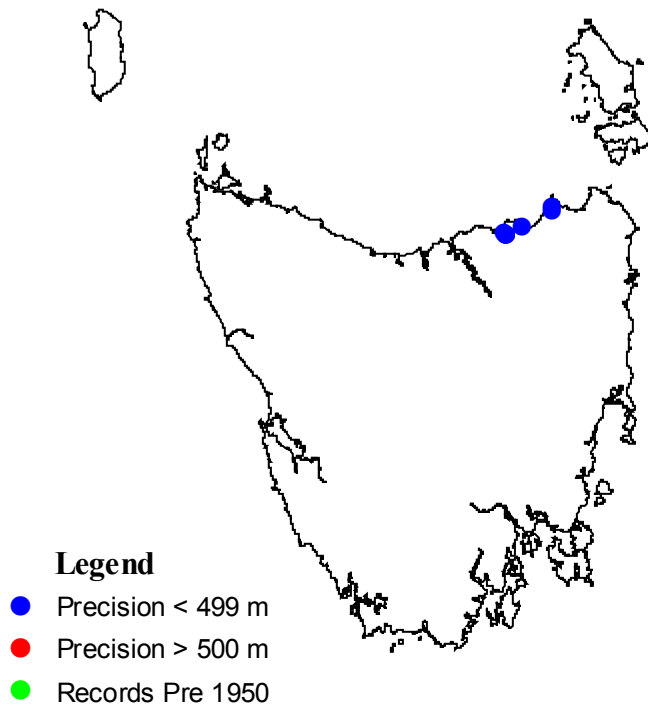
There is need for reassessment of *Pultenaea sericea* due to the very low number of populations and individuals. This species may qualify for listing as endangered.

Further Information

- Barker, P 1996, *Extension Surveys and Long term Monitoring Plots for Selected Species Threatened by Phytophthora cinnamomi in Tasmania*, Forestry Tasmania, Hobart.
- Curtis, WM & Morris, DI 1975, *The Student's Flora of Tasmania*, Part 1, Government Printer, Hobart.
- Gray, M & Knight, J eds 2001, *Flora of Melbourne: A Guide to the Indigenous Plants of the Greater Melbourne Area*, Hyland House Publishing, Melbourne.
- Kirkpatrick, JB 1991, *Tasmanian Native Bush: A Management Handbook*, Tasmanian Environment Centre, Hobart.
- Lynch, AJJ 1993, *Conservation Biology and Management of 16 Rare or Threatened FABACEAE Species in Tasmania*, Australian National Parks & Wildlife Service Endangered Species Program Project No. 4, Parks & Wildlife Service, Hobart.

Tasmanian Distribution

(As per Threatened Species Unit records, June 2003)



1:25 000 Map Sheets

Bowood, Bridport, Waterhouse, Weymouth.

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