

Gratiola pubescens



Image by Mark Wapstra

FAMILY: SCROPHULARIACEAE

BOTANICAL NAME: *Gratiola pubescens*
R.Br., *Prodr.* 435 (1810)

COMMON NAME: Hairy brooklime

COMMONWEALTH STATUS (EPBC Act):
Not Listed

TASMANIAN STATUS (TSP Act): vulnerable

Description

Gratiola pubescens is an erect to procumbent perennial herb, 2.5 to 20 cm high. It has sessile glands on the leaves, sepals and bracteoles that appear as conspicuous globular heads (especially so in dried specimens), plus a covering of fine, glandular hairs (except for the corolla and older and/or submerged growth). Branches in larger plants may creep and root towards the base. Leaves are arranged opposite one another along the stem. They are narrow-elliptic to lance-shaped, 0.7 to 2.6 cm long and 2 to 6 mm wide. The base of the leaf is cuneate or stem-clasping and the margins are toothed. Flowers occur singly in the leaf axils on stalks 1 to 2.5 mm long. The calyx consists of five free sepals 3.5 to 6 mm long, with two bracteoles inserted at its base; the corolla is tubular, 10 to 12 mm long, with a 2-lobed upper lip and 3-lobed lower lip; the corolla is white or pinkish-purple and the tube yellow. Flowering occurs in late spring and summer. The fruit is a broad capsule 3.5 to 4.5 mm long (description from Barker 1999). **Confusing species:** *Gratiola nana* is a prostrate, mat-forming rather than procumbent herb, and its leaves are mostly entire (Barker 1999).

Distribution and Habitat

On mainland Australia *Gratiola pubescens* occurs in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales (Barker 1999). In Tasmania it has been recorded from King Island, the Latrobe to Beaconsfield area, the Northern Midlands and Cape Barren Island, with recent records from the northeast (Ansons Bay Road, Binalong Bay, Cape Naturaliste, Ironhouse Point, Scottsdale, Tomahawk) and central east (Apsley Marshes, Moulting Lagoon); there are also historic records from southern Tasmania (Jordan River, South Bruny Island). The species is located most commonly in permanently or seasonally damp to swampy ground and wetland margins, and has been observed colonising areas of cleared scrub and the margins of dams and reservoirs.

Key Sites and Populations

Lavinia Plains, Port Sorell, Beaconsfield, Tomahawk, Moulting Lagoon.



Gratiola pubescens: habit & flower detail (inset; images by Richard Schahinger)

Known Reserves

Dans Hill Conservation Area, Doctors Peak Regional Reserve, Lavinia State Reserve, Moulting Lagoon Game Reserve, Mount William National Park, Powranna Nature Reserve, Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area. The species is also known from an area of private land near Conara that is covered by a conservation covenant under the Tasmanian *Nature Conservation Act 2002*.

Ecology and Management

The main threat to *Gratiola pubescens* is habitat depletion resulting from vegetation clearance and/or changes to hydrology. Plants may be susceptible to trampling and grazing, so areas supporting the species should be managed as stock-free zones.

Conservation Status Assessment

About three-quarters of the twenty known sites in Tasmania have been discovered since the species was listed on the TSP Act in 1995, including all sites in the State's east and northeast. *Gratiola pubescens* was not recognised in Tasmania until the late 1980s, having been included previously in *Gratiola nana* (Curtis 1967). Records of *Gratiola nana* in lowland areas of Tasmania that date to this period or earlier (& lack supporting herbarium specimens), should be considered questionable until the sites have been re-surveyed. A reassessment of the conservation status of *Gratiola pubescens* may be warranted following such surveys.

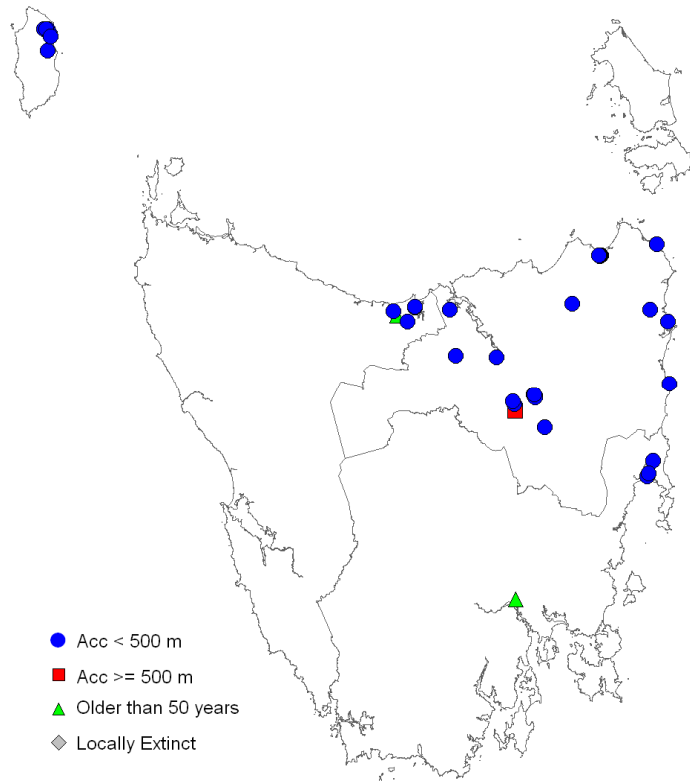
Further Information

Barker, W.R. (1999). *Scrophulariaceae*. In *Flora of Victoria, Volume 4. Dicotyledons: Cornaceae to Asteraceae*. (Eds N.G. Walsh & T.J. Entwisle). Inkata Press, Melbourne.

Curtis, W.M. (1967). *The Student's Flora of Tasmania: Part 3*. Government Printer, Hobart.

Tasmanian Distribution

(As per Threatened Species & Marine Section records, April 2014)



1:25 000 Map Sheets

Beaconsfield, Binalong, Blue Tier, Bridgenorth, Cleveland, Cranbrook, Cressy, Delmont, Egg Lagoon, Ironhouse, Latrobe, Launceston, Lodi, Monarch, Naturaliste, Nile, Port Sorell, Saltwater, Scottsdale, Sea Elephant, Tea Tree, Tomahawk, Westbury. (plus records from South Bruny Island and Cape Barren Island)

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View

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

Contact details

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Permit

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