

Lobelia rhombifolia



Image by Micah Visoiu

FAMILY: CAMPANULACEAE

BOTANICAL NAME: *Lobelia rhombifolia* de Vriese, *Pl. Preiss.* [J.G.C.Lehman] 1: 397 (1845)

COMMON NAME: Tufted lobelia

COMMONWEALTH STATUS (EPBC Act):
Not Listed

TASMANIAN STATUS (TSP Act): rare

Description

Lobelia rhombifolia is an ascending to erect, hairless, annual herb to 35 cm high, usually with several stems arising from the base. Its leaves are spoon-shaped to oblong, 8 to 25 mm long and 2 to 12 mm wide, pinnately lobed or coarsely toothed (but reducing in size up the stems and with mostly entire margins). Flowers are arranged in terminal and sometimes axillary 1 to 4 flowered cymes, with pedicels elongating after flowering to c. 12 cm long. The corolla is two-lipped, 10 to 15 mm long and dark blue: the two upper lobes are short and strongly recurved, the three lower lobes are longer and spreading, with the central lobe 5 to 10 mm long. Flowering plants have been observed in Tasmania from October to April. The fruit is a broadly obovoid capsule 5–8 mm long, containing numerous small seeds that are ellipsoid, slightly angular, 0.25 to 0.35 mm long, light brown, lustrous and very faintly ridged (description from Curtis 1963, Albrecht & Walsh 1999). **Confusing species:** *Lobelia gibbosa* and *Lobelia simplicaulis* have inflorescences that are raceme-like, one-sided in the case of *L. gibbosa*; the seed of *L. gibbosa* have a reticulate surface, while the seed of *L. simplicaulis* are smooth and strongly three-angled (Albrecht & Walsh 1999).

Distribution and Habitat

On mainland Australia *Lobelia rhombifolia* is found in Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria (Albrecht & Walsh 1999). In Tasmania the species has been recorded along the east coast between Coles Bay and Mt Cameron, with an outlying occurrence in the far north near Beaconsfield. It grows in dry sclerophyll forests dominated by *Eucalyptus amygdalina* (black peppermint) on mostly granite-derived sands; associated species may include *Allocasuarina littoralis*, *Eucalyptus obliqua*, *Kunzea ambigua*, *Leptospermum scoparium*, *Banksia marginata*, *Lepidosperma concavum*, *Hypolaena fastigiatum*, *Lomandra longifolia*, *Gahnia microstachya* and *Pteridium esculentum*.



Plates 1 & 2. *Lobelia rhombifolia*: habit and habitat
(images by Micah Visoiu and Richard Schahinger)

[The Tasmanian Herbarium holds a 1962 collection from Cleveland in the Northern Midlands, though given the lack of suitable habitat in the area it is considered likely to be a location transcription error.]

Key Sites and Populations

Mount Cameron, east of Apsley Marshes.

Known Reserves

Cameron Regional Reserve, Dans Hill Conservation Area, Freycinet National Park, Moulting Lagoon Game Reserve.

Ecology and Management

Albrecht & Walsh (1999) note that *Lobelia rhombifolia* is a ‘... disturbance ephemeral, often appearing abundantly after fires or following bulldozing of tracks but scarce or absent several years after.’ This is consistent with observations in Tasmania, with plants being found in good numbers at Mt Cameron and areas east of Apsley Marshes the season after wildfire (2007 and 2014, respectively), and few if any plants recorded in the years prior to the burns.

Conservation Status Assessment

Lobelia rhombifolia is known in Tasmania from just a handful of sites. Targeted surveys are required of recently burnt potential habitat to allow a meaningful reassessment of its conservation status to be realised.

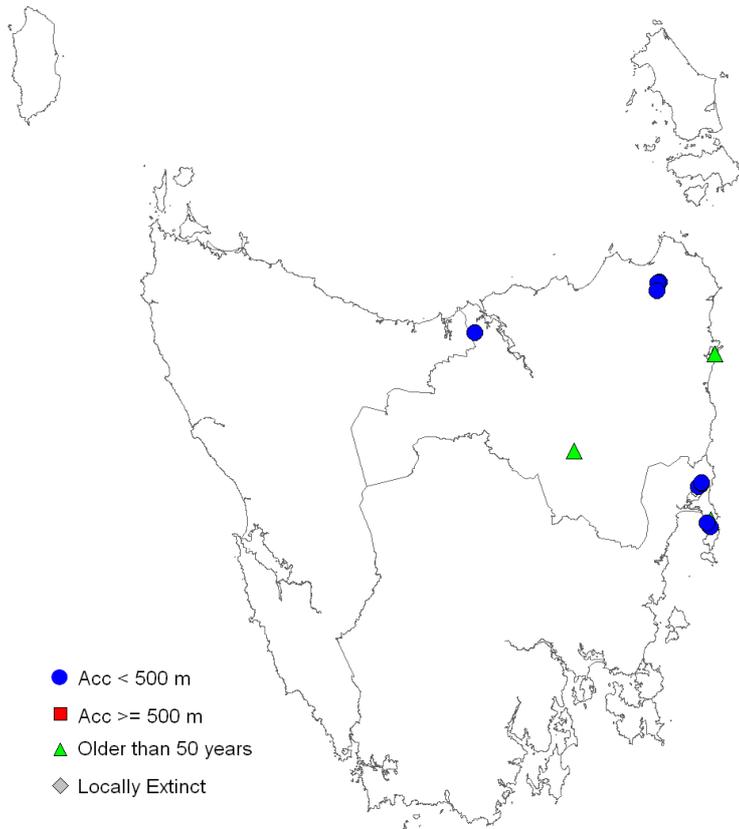
Further Information

Albrecht, D.E., & Walsh, N.G. (1999). *Campanulaceae*. In *Flora of Victoria, Volume 4. Dicotyledons: Cornaceae to Asteraceae*. (Eds N.G. Walsh & T.J. Entwisle). Inkata Press, Melbourne.

Curtis, W.M. (1963). *The Student’s Flora of Tasmania Part 2*. Government Printer, Hobart.

Tasmanian Distribution

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



1:25 000 Map Sheets

Coles Bay, Harford, Lodi, Monarch, Pioneer, St Helens (& Cleveland?)

Date last modified: 15/04/2014

View

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

Contact details

Threatened Species and Marine Section, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, GPO Box 44, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 7001. Phone (03) 6165 4340; fax (03) 6233 3477.

Permit

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