

Alternanthera denticulata



Alternanthera denticulata. R. Schahinger.

FAMILY: AMARANTHACEAE

BOTANICAL NAME: *Alternanthera denticulata*, R.Br., *Prodr.* 417 (1810)

COMMON NAME: lesser joyweed

COMMONWEALTH STATUS: (*EPBC Act*) Not Listed

TASMANIAN STATUS: (*TSP Act*) endangered

Description

A low scrambling, perennial herb with a slender but tough taproot and many branches that arise from ground level. The branches either spread along the ground or slope gently upwards, often rooting at the lower stem joints (nodes). **Leaves:** The leaves are narrow and linear in shape with bluntly pointed tips. The base of the leaf is narrowed (sometimes forming a short stalk). **Flowers:** Either a single flower or a cluster of 2-3. The flowers are papery, white or pinkish in colour, stalkless and found in the leaf axils (where the stem meets the leaf). They are initially spherical, changing to an oval or oblong shape as they age. The petals and leafy structures surrounding them (sepals) are approximately 2 mm long (3 mm in the fruiting stage). Flowering most of the year but particularly from October to January (Flora of Victoria). **Fruit:** The fruit is a small, translucent, flattened, single celled structure (description from Curtis 1967; Cunningham *et al.* 1992; Grey *et al.* 2001).

Distribution and Habitat

Alternanthera denticulata also occurs in South Australia, Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales (Cunningham *et al.* 1992). In Tasmania the species inhabits damp grasslands, swamp forest dominated by paperbark (*Melaleuca ericifolia*), and boulder gaps and river margins around the Launceston and Longford regions in the north of Tasmania (TPLUC 1996; North 2001; R. Schahinger pers. comm.).

Key Sites and Populations

The current records for *Alternanthera denticulata* are mostly from the lower reaches of the South Esk River at Duck Reach and Cataract Gorge near Launceston. To date nine populations have been identified in this region, with the largest occurring along the West Tamar Fitness Trail, with an estimated 1000 plants (R. Schahinger pers. comm.). At this site *Alternanthera denticulata* grows in paperbark swamp forest within a dense ground layer, and is associated with native species such as *Calystegia sepium*, *Persicaria subsessilis*, *Carex* spp. and *Triglochin procerum*. The remaining extant populations are within Trevallyn State Reserve — the largest of these populations occurs around the Second Basin and contains between 50 and 500 plants (North 2001).

Known Reserves

Reserved in Trevallyn Nature Recreation Area and Tamar Conservation Area.

Ecology and Management

It is unlikely that *Alternanthera denticulata* is able to cope with fire, due to the infrequent burning of its habitat. Changes in water flow may affect the species as it is possible that colonisation of the Trevallyn area occurred after the construction of the dam. Weeds also pose a threat, particularly at the West Tamar Fitness Trail site, where Japanese honeysuckle, ivy, wandering creeper, blackberry, water plantain, sharp buttercup, creeping Jenny and willows are all thriving. Recommendations by North (2001) suggest that the population at the Second Basin should be prioritised for weed management and monitoring.

Conservation Status Assessment

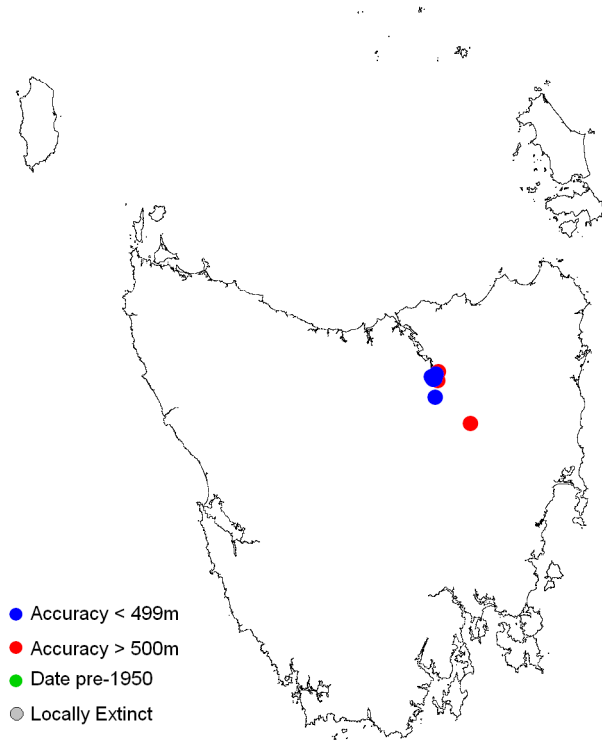
There is no immediate need for reassessment of *Alternanthera denticulata*.

Further Information

- Cunningham, GM, Mulham, W, Milthorpe, P & Leigh, J 1992, *Plants of Western New South Wales*, Inkata Press, Sydney.
- Curtis, WM 1967, *The Student's Flora of Tasmania*, Part 3, 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.
- North, A 2001, *Trevallyn State Reserve Vegetation Management Guidelines*. A Report for Parks & Wildlife Service, Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, Hobart.
- Tasmanian Public Land Use Commission 1996, *Environment & Heritage Report Vol IV, Background Report*, Part C, Tasmanian Commonwealth Regional Forest Agreement, Hobart.

Tasmanian Distribution

(From Natural Values Atlas records, July 2008)



1:25 000 Map Sheets

Prospect, Launceston, Cleveland, Westbury, Longford

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View

<http://www.dpiw.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.