

Boronia hippopala



Image: R. Schahinger

FAMILY: RUTACEAE

BOTANICAL NAME: *Boronia hippopala*
Duretto, *Muelleria* 17: 84 (2003)

COMMON NAME: Velvet boronia

COMMONWEALTH STATUS: (*EPBC Act*)
Vulnerable

TASMANIAN STATUS: (*TSP Act*) vulnerable

Description

An erect, woody shrub to 2.5 m tall that is covered with stiff, bristle-like hairs, *apart from the flowers*, giving plants a greyish-green appearance. The branchlets are slightly glandular with small, blunt projections. **Leaves:** The leaves are composed of 3–7 distinct parts and are entire in outline. They are between 6–10 mm long, 6–14 mm wide, and also slightly glandular with small, blunt projections. The terminal leaflets are between 1–9 mm long and 1–1.75 mm wide and linear or narrowly broader above the middle. They are also flat with different coloured top and bottom surfaces. The side leaflets are similar but usually slightly longer, between 2.5–11 mm. **Flowers:** The inflorescence is situated in the axils (where the stem meets the leaves), 1–3-flowered and shorter than or as long as leaves. The leaf-like structures surrounding the flower (sepals) are small, narrowly triangular and approximately 1.5–2 mm long. The petals are white to pink, narrowly ovate, pointed and between 3.5–8 mm long. Flowering may occur from September to December. **Fruit:** The fruit is approximately 2.5 mm long and 1.5 mm wide with stiff, bristle-like hairs (Duretto 2003, Schahinger 2004).

Distribution and Habitat

Boronia hippopala is endemic to Tasmania. It is known from a number of marshes in the Eastern Tiers at altitudes of 470–580 m asl, including the upper catchment of the St Pauls River and Flagstaff Marsh near Tooms Lake, with an outlying (morphologically atypical) population along the Elizabeth River. *Boronia hippopala* grows in wet heaths dominated by species such as *Callistemon viridiflorus*, *Melaleuca* spp., *Leptospermum* spp. and *Gahnia grandis*, as well as in adjacent *Eucalyptus pauciflora-dalrympleana* woodland (Schahinger 2004; Chuter 2006). The underlying substrate is Jurassic dolerite, while drainage is moderate to poor.

Key Sites and Populations

Key sites include Dukes Marsh, Horseshoe Marsh and Flagstaff Marsh (Schahinger 2004; Chuter 2006).

Known Reserves

Reserved in Mt Puzzler Forest Reserve and Tooms Lake Forest Reserve.

Ecology and Management

At the time of its listing in 2005 the major threats to *Boronia hippopala* were identified as an inappropriate fire regime and possible infection with the introduced soil-borne plant pathogen *Phytophthora cinnamomi*.

Boronia hippopala is known to regenerate after fire from soil-stored seed, and may flower after about 3 years growth (Chuter 2006). Fires at a shorter interval would prevent seed production, while a prolonged period between fires runs the risk of plants senescing and soil-stored seed losing its viability. Active fire management of the species' wet heath habitat is required, with a preferred mosaic burn approach at intervals of 12–20 years (Schahinger 2004; Chuter 2006).

Laboratory trials conducted in 2007–2008 have determined that *Boronia hippopala* is resistant to *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, although it may host the pathogen (Rudman *et al.* 2008).

Conservation Status Assessment

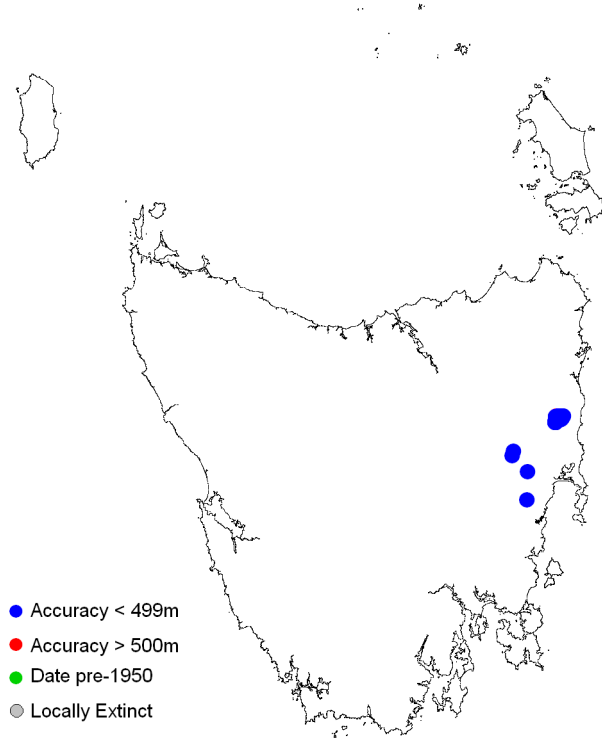
Boronia hippopala was listed as Vulnerable at the State and National level in 2005.

Further Information

- Chuter, A. (2006). Distribution and ecology of three threatened *Boronia* species. Report to the Conservation Planning Section, Forestry Tasmania. Forest Practices Authority, Hobart.
- Duretto, M.F. (2003). Notes on *Boronia* (*Rutaceae*) in eastern and northern Australia. *Muelleria* 17, 19–135.
- Rudman, T., Ilowski, M., and Schahinger, R. (2008). The susceptibility to *Phytophthora cinnamomi* of the threatened species *Boronia gunnii*, *Boronia hemichiton*, *Boronia hippopala* and *Philothea freyciana*. Nature Conservation Report 08/05, Biodiversity Conservation Branch, Department of Primary Industries and Water, Hobart.
- Schahinger, R.B. (2004). Distribution and conservation status of the Tasmanian endemic shrubs *Boronia gunnii*, *Boronia hemichiton* and *Boronia hippopala* (with brief notes on other newly described *Boronia* species). Report to the Threatened Species Unit, Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, Hobart.

Tasmanian Distribution

(As per Threatened Species Section records, August 2008)



1:25 000 Map Sheets

Fingal, Leake, Snow, St John, Tooms.

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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.