

A statement for the purposes of approved conservation advice
(s266B of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*)

Approved Conservation Advice for
***Phebalium distans* (Mt. Berryman Phebalium)**

This Conservation Advice has been developed based on the best available information at the time this conservation advice was approved.

Description

Phebalium distans, also known as the Mt. Berryman Phebalium, is a small tree in the Rutaceae family with cream flowers. The fruit is a capsule with small seeds which are shed locally. It grows to 8 metres, with a trunk of up to 15cm in diameter.

Conservation status

This species is eligible for listing as **critically endangered** because it has very low numbers of mature individuals, which are likely to continue to decline, and has a very restricted distribution that is precarious for the survival of the species.

Distribution and habitat

The Mt. Berryman Phebalium is known from ten populations in south-east Queensland, where it is endemic. Five of these are in close proximity to one another at Mt Berryman (Lockyer Valley Regional Council). Four are at Mt Jones Plateau, near Kingaroy (South Burnett Regional Council), and the tenth at Mt Walla, near Coalstoun Lakes (North Burnett Regional Council). It is always found in semi-evergreen vine thicket on red volcanic soils or communities adjacent to this vegetation type. This species occurs within the Burnett Mary and South East (QLD) Natural Resource Management Regions.

Threats

The main identified threats to the Mt. Berryman Phebalium include vegetation clearing, road works and roadside maintenance. Additional threats include urban development, fire events and weed invasion.

The main potential threats to the Mt. Berryman Phebalium include the drift of agricultural chemicals, erosion, soil compaction due to human traffic, dumping of rubbish, inappropriate modification of its habitat, vandalism and climate change.

The following regional actions can be done to stop the decline or support the recovery of the Mt. Berryman Phebalium.

Research Priorities

There are no specific research priorities at this time.

Regional Priority Actions

The regional priority recovery and threat abatement actions required for the Mt. Berryman Phebalium are identified below:

Habitat Loss, Disturbance and Modification

- Manage threats to areas of vegetation that contain populations of the Mt. Berryman Phebalium.

- Ensure chemicals or other mechanisms used to eradicate weeds do not have a significant adverse impact on the Mt. Berryman Phebalium.
- Ensure road widening and maintenance activities (or other infrastructure or development activities as appropriate) in areas where the Mt. Berryman Phebalium occurs do not impact on known populations.
- Investigate formal conservation arrangements such as the use of covenants, conservation agreements or inclusion in reserve tenure.
- Regulation of seed harvesting.

Invasive Weeds

- Develop a management plan or utilise an existing plan such as the Laidley Shire Draft Local Government Pest Management Plan or the Kingaroy Pest Management Plan for the control of weeds such as *Megatrysus maximus* and *Asparagus africanus* in the local region.

Fire

- Develop and implement a suitable fire management strategy for the Mt. Berryman Phebalium.
- Identify appropriate intensity and interval of fire to promote seed germination.
- Provide maps of known occurrences to local and state Rural Fire Services and seek inclusion of mitigative measures in bush fire risk management plans, risk registers and/or operational maps.

Conservation Information

- Raise awareness of the Mt. Berryman Phebalium within the local community. Consider the need for fact sheets/information brochures/ field days in conjunction with known industry or community interest groups.
- An awareness strategy could include the following interest groups: Lockyer Valley Regional Council, North Burnett Regional Council, South Burnett Regional Council, Kingaroy and District Branch of SGAP, Burnett Mary and South East (QLD) NRM Groups, Queensland Environment Protection Authority.
- Signpost vegetation in vicinity of populations on road reserves as environmentally significant to prevent accidental damage by road maintenance crews.

Establishing Additional Populations

- Undertake appropriate seed collection and storage.
- Undertake seed germination and/or vegetative propagation trials to determine the requirements for successful establishment.
- Investigate options for linking, enhancing or establishing additional populations.
- Implement appropriate translocation protocols if establishing additional populations is considered necessary and feasible.

The following local actions can be done to stop the decline or support the recovery of the Mt. Berryman Phebalium.

Local Priority Actions

The local priority recovery and threat abatement actions for the Mt. Berryman Phebalium are identified below:

Habitat Loss, Disturbance and Modification

- Monitor known populations to identify key threats or the progress of recovery, including the effectiveness of management actions and the need to adapt them if necessary.
- Control access routes to suitably constrain public access to known sites on public land.
- Suitably control and manage access on private land.

- Undertake survey work in potential habitat to locate any additional populations.
- Minimise adverse impacts from land use at known sites.
- Protect populations of the listed species through the development of conservation agreements and/or covenants.
- Provide signage to prohibit dumping of rubbish in the vicinity of known populations.

Invasive Weeds

- Identify and remove weeds in the local area, which could become a threat to the Mt. Berryman Phebalium, using appropriate methods.
- Manage sites to prevent introduction of invasive weeds, which could become a threat to the Mt. Berryman Phebalium, using appropriate methods.

Existing plans/Management prescriptions that are relevant to the species

Lockyer Valley Regional Council

- Draft Local Government Pest Management Plan 2004/5

South Burnett Regional Council

- Remnant Vegetation Strategy 2002/3
- Kingaroy Pest Management Plan 2005

This list does not necessarily encompass all actions that may be of benefit to the Mt. Berryman Phebalium, but highlights those that are considered to be of highest priority at the time of preparing the conservation advice.