

Knead Swainson-pea (*Swainsona reticulata*)



Above: Knead Swainson-pea in flower. Left: Knead Swainson-pea seed pods. Photos: Ian Sluiter.

This fact sheet summarises background information about Knead Swainson-pea (*Swainsona reticulata*).

Knead Swainson-pea is known to occur within Victoria at eight sites in the Mallee and one in the Wimmera region.

Description

Knead Swainson-pea is a prostrate to semi-ascending perennial herb which grows to approximately 15cm tall¹. It flowers in spring, with a deep purple flower containing a seedpod with 10-30 seeds. Mature specimens have a tap root that is approximately 30cm long, which,

from preliminary studies at Karadoc, appears not to be connected to other underground lateral roots².

Habitat

The species is mostly restricted in Victoria to low aeolian, sandy rises on or very near to the floodplain of the Murray River. The largest population of this species occurs at Karadoc Swamp, with some 7,800 mature plants estimated to occur there when surveyed in September 2010².

Ecology

Vigorous growth of Knead Swainson-pea appears to be stimulated by available

moisture and is therefore most frequently observed following adequate spring rainfall. It prefers open ground, in the canopy gaps of overstorey trees.



At a glance

- The Knead Swainson-pea (*Swainsona reticulata*) J.M. Black is considered vulnerable in Victoria by Department of Sustainability (DSE) and is listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee (FFG) Act 1988;
- It is a prostrate to semi-ascending perennial herb which grows to approximately 15cm tall.



Above: Kneed Swainson-pea at Karadoc Swamp. Photo: Ian Sluiter.

A matter of survival

The Kneed Swainson-pea is considered vulnerable in Victoria by Department of Sustainability (DSE) and is listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee (FFG) Act 1988. A number of threats to the Kneed Swainson-pea have been identified and include:

- Habitat degradation caused by grazing herbivores, especially rabbits; vehicular tracks and soil disturbance;
- Invasion of annual weed;
- Habitat loss.

How can you help?

The Mallee CMA encourages the community to assist the recovery of the

Kneed Swainson-pea by:

- Sticking to existing tracks and roads while travelling through reserves;
- Ensuring all rubbish that enters a reserve leaves the reserve;
- Supporting the control of feral animals, especially rabbits;
- Restoring habitat by planting locally indigenous species in surrounding areas.

Find out more

The Mallee CMA has undertaken a survey to better understand the current condition and ecology of the Kneed Swainson-pea population at Karadoc Swamp. For further information on this survey please contact

the Mallee CMA on 03 5051 4377 or refer to the Technical Bulletin available on the Mallee CMA website at:

www.malleecma.vic.gov.au

References

- ¹. Walsh, N.G. and Entwisle, T.J. (1999). *Flora of Victoria Volume 2: Ferns and Allied Plants, Conifers and Monocotyledons*. Incata Press, Melbourne.
- ². Sluiter, I.R.K. (2010). *A survey of Kneed Swainson Pea (Swainsona reticulata) J.M. Black*. Unpublished report to the Mallee CMA Ogyris Pty. Ltd., Mildura.

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