

SPECIES MANAGEMENT PROFILE

Sowerbaea juncea purple rushlily

Group: Magnoliophyta (flowering plants), Liliopsida (monocots), Asparagales, Laxmanniaceae

Status: *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995:* vulnerable
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999: Not listed

Endemic: Found in Tasmania and elsewhere

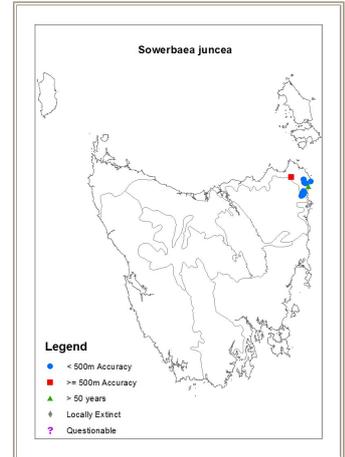
Status:



Sowerbaea juncea (purple rushlily) is a tufted herbaceous perennial "lily", with dense clusters of mauve flowers and long thin green leaves, restricted to a limited number of sites between The Gardens and Mt William (Eddystone Road area). The species flowers from October through to February. At other times of the year, the species is virtually impossible to find but in spring-summer the mauve flowerheads are obvious. Purple rushlily occurs in low-lying relatively poorly-drained heathland and sedgy heathland patches between low forested rises. The main threats to purple rushlily is lack of disturbance in its heathland habitat (it appears to benefit from fire or other disturbance to stimulate flowering), inappropriate disturbance (e.g. stock grazing, weed invasion, fertiliser and herbicide application), land clearing (mainly historical) and possibly establishment of plantations adjacent to heathy woodland remnants.

Key Points

- Important:** Is this species in your area? Do you need a permit? Ensure you've covered all the issues by checking the Planning Ahead page.
- Important:** Different threatened species may have different requirements. For any activity you are considering, read the Activity Advice pages for background information and important advice about managing around the needs of multiple threatened species.



Habitat

- 'Habitat' refers to both known habitat for the species (i.e. in or near habitat where the species has been recorded) and potential habitat (i.e. areas of habitat with appropriate characteristics for the species and within the species potential range which have not yet been adequately surveyed).
- If in doubt about whether a site represents potential habitat for this species, contact the Threatened Species Section for further advice.
- The known range of purple rushlily is a small area between The Gardens (north of Binalong Bay, in the Doctors Peak-Last River area) and Mt William National Park (Eddystone Point area, Eddystone Road, Icena Creek). The potential range is probably not much greater because extensive surveys of heathland habitats have failed to detect the species.
- Habitat for purple rushlily includes the following elements: most sites are associated with low-lying relatively poorly-drained heathland and sedgy heathland patches between forested low rises; the species often occurs on the fringes of these often dense heathland swatches but can also be sporadic in the heart of the heathland; open heathy/sedgy woodland (usually dominated by *Eucalyptus amygdalina* but also occasionally *Eucalyptus ovata*) also supports several subpopulations; in such habitats the species is often most prevalent in the patches of light canopy with open understorey, often created by a combination of low intensity fires and cattle grazing.

What to avoid

- Clearing of habitat
- Ensure habitat is subjected to an appropriate disturbance regime (e.g. fires between 5-20 years apart)

Surveying

Key	Survey reliability more info
M	Best time to survey
M	Potential time to survey
<i>M</i>	Poor time to survey
M	Non-survey period

To ensure you follow the law - check whether your survey requires a permit. Always report any new records to the Natural Values Atlas, or send the information direct to the Threatened Species Section. Refer to the Activity Advice: Surveying page for background information.

<i>Sowerbaea juncea</i>	Spring		Summer					Autumn				Winter												
purple rushlily	S	S	O	O	N	N	D	D	J	J	F	F	M	M	A	A	M	M	J	J	J	J	A	A

- Surveys for this tufted perennial herb must be undertaken during its peak flowering period, in spring to summer, as it is

virtually impossible to detect in the absence of the distinctive flower-heads, with the tuft of green leaves usually hidden amongst the dense grass and sedge sward typical of its habitat. The flowering season extends from October through to early February. Sometimes old flower-heads (pale papery-dry clusters) are found later in the flowering season but these can be difficult to detect. *Sowerbaea juncea* occurs in habitats maintained through disturbance events, allowing successional vegetation changes that create open areas suitable for colonisation and that promote flowering.

- In Tasmania, *Sowerbaea juncea* is restricted to the near-coastal parts of the east and northeast between The Gardens and Eddystone Point, where it generally occurs in low-lying relatively poorly-drained heathland and sedgy heathland patches between forested low rises. The species often occurs on the fringes of these often dense heathland swathes but can also be sporadic in the heart of the heathland. *Sowerbaea juncea* can also occur in open heathy/sedgy woodland (usually dominated by *Eucalyptus amygdalina* but also occasionally *Eucalyptus ovata*) where it tends to be most prevalent in patches with a light canopy cover and an open understorey which are often created by a combination of low intensity fires and cattle grazing.

Helping the species

- Learn to identify purple rushlily so as to recognise the species if it occurs on your property. If in doubt about what it is, seek expert assistance with identification.
- If you live or work in the area where the species occurs (see distribution map, above), look out for and record any observations of the species. All records of this species can provide important information on distribution and abundance.
- If you are interested in knowing for certain whether the species occurs on your land, organise a formal survey. You may need to employ an ecological consultant to do this. Your local Bushcare or Field Naturalist club may be able to assist you with a survey.
- Important! Always report any observations of the species to the DPIPW Natural Values Atlas, or else provide the data direct to the Threatened Species Section. Records stored on the NVA are a permanent record and are accessible to other people interested in this species.
- Consider the needs of the whole habitat. Preserving a threatened species' habitat is the best way to manage both the species and the environment in which it lives.
- For long-term protection of localities on private land – consider protection of habitat through a vegetation management agreement or conservation covenant'.
- 'See the 'What is Needed' section in the purple rushlily Listing Statement for a full list of conservation management actions for this species.

Cutting or clearing trees or vegetation

- Clearing of heathland and heathy woodland for establishment of plantation or development for agriculture are the main historical and ongoing threats to purple rushlily.
- To protect known localities – retain a buffer of undisturbed native vegetation around known sites to maintain the integrity of habitat.
- To prevent loss of habitat – avoid clearing of heathland and heathy woodland habitat.

Forestry plantations

- Some localities of this species are in close proximity to hardwood eucalypt plantations established on land previously used for grazing. At these sites, the species persists in now isolated heathland and heathy woodland remnants potentially subject to edge effects from the surrounding plantation.
- To prevent degradation and loss of habitat – retain a buffer of open vegetation between the native vegetation remnant and the plantation to minimise alterations to the habitat conditions within the remnant.

Burning

- Purple rushlily probably benefits from its heathland and heathy woodland habitat being burnt to maintain patches of open ground. The natural fire frequency of its habitat is probably in the order of 5-15 years.
- To maintain long-term viability of habitat – undertake mosaic patch-burning of heathlands and heathy woodlands every 5-15 years.

Agriculture

- Several populations are in close proximity to agricultural land and are possibly vulnerable to edge effects such as drying out of habitat, herbicide spray drift and weed/pasture grass invasion.
- To prevent degradation and loss of habitat – carefully manage agricultural activities near known sites and habitat to avoid impacts on this species.

Stock grazing

- Several populations are in close proximity to agricultural land and are possibly vulnerable to grazing and trampling by stock, although some level of ground disturbance may be beneficial.
- To prevent degradation and loss of habitat – carefully manage levels and timing of stock grazing in areas of habitat.
- Consider fencing heathland and heathy woodland remnants but note that continued alternative disturbance may be needed.
- To prevent degradation and loss of habitat – avoid feeding stock silage or hay within patches of habitat.

Further information

Check also for listing statement or notesheet pdf above (below the species image).

Cite as: Threatened Species Section (2023). *purple rushlily (Sowerbaea juncea)*: *Species Management Profile for Tasmania's Threatened Species Link*. <https://www.threatenedspecieslink.tas.gov.au/Pages/Sowerbaea-juncea.aspx> Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania. Accessed on 30/3/2023.

Contact details: Threatened Species Section, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, GPO Box 44, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 7001. Phone (1300 368 550).

Permit: A permit is required under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* to 'take' (which includes kill, injure, catch, damage, destroy and collect), keep, trade in or process any specimen or products of a listed species. Additional permits may also be required under other Acts or regulations to take, disturb or interfere with any form of wildlife or its products, (e.g. dens, nests, bones). This may also depend on the tenure of the land and other agreements relating to its management.