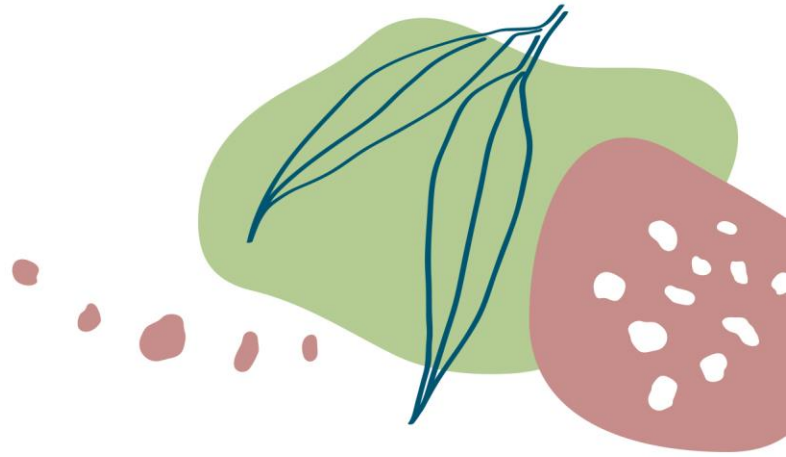


Media Release



18 October 2021

GENETIC DIVERSITY USED TO CREATE NEW BUTTON WRINKLEWORT POPULATIONS

Some of Australia's most genetically diverse populations of the threatened daisy, the Button Wrinklewort, have been created by the Glenelg Hopkins CMA this spring.

The Button Wrinklewort (*Rudidosia leptorhynchoides*) is an endangered perennial daisy found in the grasslands and grassy woodlands of South-eastern Australia. In south-west Victoria, the species belongs to a unique genetic race unable to successfully reproduce with other populations closer to Melbourne, New South Wales and the ACT.

A recovery project on the grasslands, being delivered by the Glenelg Hopkins CMA with funding through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, has a particular focus on the daisy.

For the last three years the team has been collecting DNA samples and seed from plants at the 8 known sites in south-west Victoria.

The work has allowed the team at the Glenelg Hopkins CMA, with support from Monash University, the Arthur Rylah Institute and the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, to propagate, and make scientifically informed decisions about mixing plants from diverse geographic origins from otherwise isolated gene pools.

This spring, seedlings have been planted out to create four entirely new populations of Button Wrinklewort with diverse genetics backgrounds.

These new populations are located near Ararat, Dunkeld, and Chepstowe on private land with the support of landholders.

"We have been genetically testing all the plants in the remnants population of the species in south-west Victoria to understand how they relate to one another," Glenelg Hopkins CMA senior biodiversity officer, Ben Zeeman, said.

"Knowing this means we can create plant communities with enough genetic diversity to support long-term survival, as well as ensure populations have a strong chance for future adaptations to environmental change."

In equally exciting news – the project discovered a previously unknown single plant own on a roadside near Caramut,

The plant, which according to its basal measurement had been thriving for a number of years on its own, could not produce seedlings as it requires pollen from an a unrelated plant to create viable seeds.

VVP team members undertook hand pollination of the plant in 2019 and 2020 which yielded 12 seedlings and its own social media page on Facebook ‘The Lonely Button Wrinklewort’ (www.facebook.com/buttonwrinklewort)

Seedlings grown from that individual plant have been included in the new populations created by this project.

The single individual plant, colloquially referred to as Button, is due to have seedlings planted alongside it in spring 2022, when it will be lonely no more.

ENDS



CAPTION: Button Wrinklewort plant.



CAPTION: The Glenelg Hopkins CMA team planting out of a new Button Wrinklewort population near Ararat with 500 genetically and geographically diverse seedlings.



CAPTION: Over 2000 seedlings of the Button Wrinklewort have been planted by the Glenelg Hopkins CMA this spring which has created four new populations of this endangered daisy.