

New Wildflower Species Found



Many species of flora and fauna are being lost every year around the world - many before they are even identified.

So the discovery of a new species in our region is reason for excitement, and this was the case recently when a plant collected during a routine flora survey was confirmed as a new species.

The small pink flower has been identified as a member of the Tremandraceae family, and has been *Tetratheca* sp. New Norcia and its discovery is currently being written up in the West Australia Herbarium Journal, Nuytsia.

The flora survey was held in 2007 on a farm in the East Moore Catchment, as part of a project aimed at revegetating the natural drainage lines of the catchment and protecting the remnant vegetation.

Project Manager Lana Kelly said many species of wildflowers were collected on the day and sent to the WA Herbarium for processing.

“While the herbarium was vouchering the species, they discovered the plant which was very similar to *Tetratheca similis* however there were some features that were different.,” said Lana. “So last year a research scientist with the herbarium came up to see if we could find the plant again”.

Lana said that they searched for more than an hour without finding anything before deciding to look at previous video camera footage to help refine the search.

As she was walking back to the car, Lana spotted the elusive little pink flower, just ten metres from the car.

“We were really excited about it,” she said. “Considering the area we were searching was more than 18 hectares it turned out that our research scientist Ryonen Butcher had parked her car within ten metres of the plant.

According to Lana, the find was a perfect way to wrap up the East Moore Project, which was managed by the Moore Catchment Council and administered by the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council (NACC) with funding from the State and Australian Governments.

The East Moore Catchment covers around 160,000 hectares which is home to a unique and diverse range of plant species, however less than 25 per cent of the original native vegetation remain.

The remaining remnant vegetation and the productivity of the land is threatened by rising groundwater and salinity.

Much of the salt affected land is in areas of natural drainage that isn't suitable for cropping but can be made productive with salt-tolerant species, and act as a wildlife corridor linking remnants

Lana said that discovering a new species is very exciting and part of the reason she loved being part of the project. She is currently writing up a report on the outcomes of the wide ranging project.