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Darwinia squarrosa is a small shrub which only grows in the south west of Western Australia (WA). This species is known as the Pink Mountain Bell for its bell shaped flowers that are actually a cluster of six or seven flowers. Reaching one metre in height, *Darwinia squarrosa* can be found in rocky areas of the Stirling Ranges, WA. Listed as Threatened in WA and Vulnerable nationally.

Description

Darwinia squarrosa is one of several *Darwinia* species known collectively as "Mountain Bells". This name arises from the bell shaped appearance of the flowers. This is created by six or seven small flowers enclosed within large bracts (clusters) which give the bell shape. The cluster of flowers enclosed within the bell have red or pink petals and are up to 20 millimetres long. The shrub itself is erect and grows to 1 metre in height.

Key Facts

Common name: Pink Mountain Bell
Fringed Mountain Bell

Historical notes: Discovered around 1850

Conservation status (state): Threatened (WA)

Conservation Status (EPBC): Vulnerable

Maximum height: 1 metre

Lifespan: Unknown

Distribution

South west of Western Australia on the eastern peaks of Stirling Range National Park.

Habitat and Ecology

Darwinia squarrosa grows in soils that are described as sandy clay loam to sandy loam, within rocky areas of the Stirling Ranges in south Western Australia.

Name Origins

Darwinia squarrosa is in the genus *Darwinia*, named after Dr Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of Charles Darwin. The species name, *squarrosa* comes from the Latin word *squarrosus* meaning rough or scaly. This refers to the rough textured leaves of this species.

Threats

The two main potential threats to this species include dieback caused by *Phytophthora cinnamomi* and too frequent fires. Fringed Mountain Bell will re-establish from seed after fire, but may take 4–5 years before flowering and seeding again. Fire frequency at 5–6 years or less may eliminate this species in situ.



Conservation activities by the Australian Seed Bank Partnership

This project assisted the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions in WA to establish two seed orchards in the Albany area. These orchards will produce seed of several Threatened plant species from the Stirling Range National Park, including *Darwinia squarrosa*. The aim of these seed orchards is to bulk-up the seed collections of species that are challenging to collect from the wild. Eighty-seven *Darwinia squarrosa* seedlings were planted into a seed orchard in late May 2021. Seed collections from these orchards will enable future in situ recovery work such as translocations, and will provide seed material for seed based research that will help us to better understand the species, facilitating their ongoing management.

References

<http://anpsa.org.au/d-squ.html>
<https://florabase.dpaw.wa.gov.au/browse/profile/5530>
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