



Chrysocephalum semipapposum



Chrysocephalum semipapposum (formerly *Helichrysum semipapposum*) is a greyish, softly hairy herb with fine upright stems growing from the base. Bunches of golden everlasting flowers are produced at the tops of the stems [7]. Common names include Clustered Everlasting [6], Tall Everlasting [7] and Yellow Buttons [10, 11].

Population map:

www.ala.org.au/explore/species-maps/

Natural Populations

Chrysocephalum semipapposum occurs in all Australian states [11]. It occurs in a wide variety of habitats on a range of soil types, and like *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* shows variation in form and structure. The two species also appear to intergrade and the intermediate forms can be difficult to assign to one or other species [2].

Flowering and Seeds

C. semipapposum has clusters of small yellow flowers, mainly from Spring to early Summer although some can be found throughout the year [6, 8, 11]. Seed is collected mostly from December to January. Monitor closely as mature seeds soon dispersed by wind [5].

Fruits (achenes) are tightly clustered in the old dried flower heads. Each head contains many achenes that loosen in the head and develop a fluffy appearance as they mature. At maturity the individual achenes release easily from the seedhead. Each achene has a feathery attachment called a pappus [3].

Collect light dry seed after flowering before it disperses. Seed can be collected by hand into large paper bags then allowed to dry, or small

portable vacuum cleaners have also been used for collection [3]. Store seed in paper bags [1]. Seed handling involves breaking up the seedheads, then sieving to remove any large material. Keep dry and add small amount of insecticide to collected material before storing [3].

Do not collect the seed in wet weather or after rain, as the seed readily retains moisture, and can develop fungal problems [3]. Seed retains viability for several years.



photo: C. Miller

Cultivation and Uses

C. semipapposum propagates readily from seed [4, 12]. Lightly cover fine seed when sowing [1]. Seed can be heavily predated by insect activity resulting in poor germination [7].

Sow in spring when day temperatures are 20 °C or so. Keep seed trays moist but not over-watered as the seed will rot. Seed doesn't germinate well over 25 °C, possibly because it is too difficult to water appropriately [7].

Seed retains viability for several years [4]. *C. semipapposum* can also be grown from cuttings [4].

C. semipapposum is an excellent ornamental plant for rockeries, slopes, containers, hanging baskets, pots, mass plantings or as a feature [5, 9]. The stems may become decumbent and then develop hundreds of smaller stems, in this way a single plant may develop some ground-covering characteristics [7].

This plant is hardy in most situations and grows in full sun to part sun [8]. It will also survive in the dry shade below established Eucalypts, however it is likely to be fairly sparse

in such conditions [7]. It withstands periods of dryness but does best with extra moisture [8]. The plant is long lived and frost hardy [9, 12].

Cutting the plant to the base will very effectively regenerate a plant that has died back, however it may be worth occasionally replanting or try to encourage self-sowing [7]. Young growth is sticky and hairy [1].

C. semipapposum usually occurs as scattered plants and is seldom abundant. Growth is most vigorous in spring and the plant can remain green through summer, although it may dry off back to the base in very dry conditions [1, 2]. It is not highly palatable and is usually grazed only when other feed is not available [2].

Flowers are a nectar source for butterflies [5].



photo: GACR

To source seeds or plants:
www.grassywoodlands.org.au



References

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- [2] Cunningham, G.M., Mulham, W.E., Milthorpe, P.L. and Leigh, J.H. (1981). *Plants of Western New South Wales*. D. West: NSW Government Printing Office.
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Internet links

- [6] The University of Melbourne, Faculty of Science, School of Botany. Plant description: http://www.botany.unimelb.edu.au/buffalo/Chrysocephalum_semipapposum.htm
- [7] Indigenous Flora and Fauna Association website: <http://www.iffa.org.au/chrysocephalum-semipapposum>
- [8] Mallee Native Plants Nursery website: <http://www.malleenativeplants.com.au/chrysocephalum-semipapposum-clustered-everlasting/>
- [9] Provincial Plants and Landscapes: http://plantsandlandscapes.com.au/prov_site/Chrysocephalum_semipapposum
- [10] Friends of Black Hill and Morialta Incorporated website: <http://www.fobhm.org/noframes/chrysocephalum.htm>
- [11] PlantNET National Herbarium of New South Wales: <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=sp&name=Chrysocephalum~semipapposum>
- [12] Australian National Botanic Gardens & Australian National Herbarium, Harden Species List: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/greening-grainbelt/harden-species-list.xls>
- [13] Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne website: http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/6811/Plant_sheet.pdf