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Lomandra filiformis



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Lomandra filiformis is a perennial tussock, sparse or occasionally in short, dense mats to 20 cm diameter [5]. Common names include Wattle Mat-rush [5] and Wattle Mat-lily [2].

The name *Lomandra* comes from the Greek, Loma meaning edge or border and aner meaning man or male, referring to the borders on the anthers of some species. The specific name *filiformis* means threadlike, referring to the narrow leaves [7].

There are 3 subspecies recognised: *L. filiformis* subsp. *filiformis*, *L. filiformis* subsp. *coriacea* and *L. filiformis* subsp. *flavior* [5].

Population map: <http://www.ala.org.au/explore/species-maps/>

Natural Populations

Lomandra filiformis is found in NSW, Qld, and Vic. [5]. It occurs in open forest and woodland areas [5, 7, 9] and will tolerate much drier conditions than *Lomandra longifolia* [7]. It grows in a variety of well-drained soil types from clays to humus-rich and sandy or rocky soils [5, 7].

Flowering and Seeds

The inconspicuous flowers are unisexual, and the plants are dioecious, ie. male and female flowers are on separate plants [6]. Flowering usually occurs from October - November [2] although plants may flower in response to fire [6]. The flowers are cream to bright yellow, hence the common name of Wattle Mat-rush [7].

The fruits are roundish capsules clustered along the flower-spike. The capsules are brown when ripe. Each contains 2-3 hard seeds that are cream, brown, orange or reddish [4].

Seed collecting is from late January to late February. Monitor closely as mature seeds shed quickly [2]. Seed is dispersed locally [6].

To collect, cut the stems with secateurs and place upside down in a large bag. The seed will be easier to extract if the capsules are still attached to the stems. Threshing may be required to fully extract seed. *L. filiformis* appears to only set low quantities of seeds every 3-5 years [4].

Cultivation and Uses

L. filiformis can be propagated by either seed or division [7].

To perform well, seeds need to be sown directly after collection. Soaking seeds in warm water 24 hours prior to sowing will help break their dormancy [7]. Their germination rate is low and they can take between 4 to 12 weeks or even longer to emerge [1, 7].

An established plant can be divided but ensure roots are attached to each section before planting. Each new plant can be planted directly into the garden or into a pot [7]. This plant spreads by underground creeping rhizomes and when affected by fire will re-establish from these [6, 7].

L. filiformis grows well in full sun or part shade and can tolerate a range of temperatures from extreme highs to lows. It is exceptionally drought hardy and tolerant to frost [7]. As a perennial this plant can become dormant until conditions are suitable for new growth [8].

This species can be used for mass plantings in garden beds and borders. It is particularly useful in small gardens and courtyards as a

design feature and can be planted to complement native grasses. As it is slow growing this makes it ideal as a container plant [7]. No watering is required once established if planted in suitable conditions, although it will require water over long dry periods [8].

L. filiformis is useful as a bank stabiliser and it provides useful habitat for ground fauna [1].

Indigenous people used the nectar as a food, and the leaves for basket making [9].

L. filiformis attracts butterflies, and provides food for caterpillars of native butterflies and moths [2, 9].



photo: C. Miller

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

References

- [1] Carr, D. (1997). *Plants in Your Pants: a pocket guide for the identification and use of the common plants of the northwest slopes*. Greening Australia NSW, Armidale.
- [2] Stelling, F. (ed.) (1998). *South West Slopes Revegetation Guide*. Murray Catchment Management Committee, Albury, NSW.
- [3] Ralph, M. (1997). *Growing Australian Native Plants from Seed For Revegetation, Tree Planting and Direct Seeding*. Fitzroy, Victoria: Murray Ralph/Bushland Horticulture.
- [4] Ralph, M. (1993). *Seed Collection of Australian Native Plants For Revegetation, Tree Planting and Direct Seeding*. 2nd ed. Fitzroy, Victoria: Bushland Horticulture.

Internet links

- [5] PlantNET National Herbarium of New South Wales: <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=s&p&name=Lomandra~filiformis>
- [6] The Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust: http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/science/Evolutionary_Ecology_Research/Ecology_of_Cumberland_Plain_Woodland/woodland_plants/lomandra_filiformis
- [7] Australian National Botanic Gardens, Australian National Herbarium: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/interns-2009/lomandra-filiformis.html>
- [8] Australian Wholesale Nursery: http://www.bushlandflora.com.au/individual_plant.php?p=Lomandra%2filiformis&u id=1564
- [9] Yarra Ranges Local Plant Directory: http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Residents/Yarra_Ranges_Plant_Directory/Lower_Storey/Grasses_Rushes_and_Sedges/Lomandra_filiformis_ssp__coriacea