



photo: J. Lindner

Vittadinia gracilis

Vittadinia gracilis is a small erect perennial shrub, 10–40 cm high, with a woody base. It is covered with dense fine white hairs and glandular hairs [6]. Its common name is Woolly New Holland Daisy [6].

Population map:

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

Natural Populations

Vittadinia gracilis is found in NSW, Vic, Tas, SA [6]. It grows on most soil types, in sclerophyll forests, woodlands, grasslands, mallees, along roadsides and in pastures [5, 6, 8, 10]

This species is similar in appearance to *Vittadinia cuneata* but is distinguished by the presence of thick woolly hairs on the leaves, which give *V. gracilis* a greyish appearance, whereas the short rigid hairs of *V. cuneata* give it a more green appearance [5].

To source seeds or plants:

www.grassywoodlands.org.au

Flowering and Seeds

V. gracilis flowers most commonly in spring [5] but some flowers can be found at most other times of the year [1, 6].

The fruit is small, dry and leathery with a sparse covering of hairs and thickened margins. The pappus (ring of scales or hairs found on top of fruit) consists of barbed bristles [5]. The seedheads become fluffy, pale brown and release very easily when ripe [3].

Collect entire seedheads into paper bags and allow to dry. Small portable vacuum cleaners have also been used for collection. Don't collect in wet weather or after rain as the seed retains moisture and can be destroyed by fungus. Rub seedheads against fine wire screeds or break up seed heads by hand. Sieve to clean [3]. Store with fluffy pappus attached [3].

Cultivation and Uses

V. gracilis is grown readily from seed, which usually germinates within 1-3 weeks. Spring-harvested seed has greater viability and percentage germination than autumn-collected seed [7]. Seed does not appear to have an after-ripening period, but light is required for germination. Soaking or leaching the seed for 10 days may improve germination. Sow seed on the soil surface or cover lightly [4].

V. gracilis yielded 2% and 4% emergence in the nursery with cold stratified and untreated seed respectively, and no field emergence was recorded for this species.

V. gracilis has not performed well in direct-seeding trials [2] and further field trialing of this species is warranted to prove its ability to be direct seeded.

It can be a dominant pasture species over large areas in woodland, grassland or mallee communities, although it tends to dominate for a few seasons and then decline in abundance or even go out of the pasture for a period [1].

V. gracilis is not particularly palatable to stock but is eaten in the absence of more desirable species, apparently without ill-effect; at times it may be severely grazed [1].



(a) photo: M. Fagg

References

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[1] 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.

[2] Murphy R.G. and Dalton G.S. (1996). Understorey establishment research. *Technical Report No 249*. Primary Industries South Australia.

[3] Ralph, M. (1993). *Seed Collection of Australian Native Plants For Revegetation, Tree Planting and Direct Seeding*. 2nd ed. Fitzroy, Victoria: Bushland Horticulture.

[4] Ralph, M. (1997). *Growing Australian Native Plants from Seed For Revegetation, Tree planting and Direct Seeding*. Fitzroy, Victoria: Murray Ralph/Bushland Horticulture.

[9] O'Connor, P. J., Smith S. E. and Smith F. A. (2002). Arbuscular mycorrhizas influence plant diversity and community structure in a semiarid herbland. *New Phytologist*. Vol. 154, Issue 1, pp. 209–218. Online: <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/118908986/abstract?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0>

Internet links

[5] Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment: [http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter,nsf/Attachments/LJEM-76QVSA/\\$FILE/Vittadinia%20gracilis.pdf](http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter,nsf/Attachments/LJEM-76QVSA/$FILE/Vittadinia%20gracilis.pdf)

[6] PlantNET National Herbarium of New South Wales: <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=s&name=Vittadinia-gracilis>

[7] Greening Australia website: http://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/uploads//General%20pdfs/VIC_GG_march_2010.pdf

[8] Victorian Flora: <http://www.victorianflora.wmcn.org.au/plantDetail.php?plantno=375.00000>

[10] Australian National Botanic Gardens & Australian National Herbarium, Harden Species List: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/greening-grainbelt/harden-species-list.xls>