



SAVING OUR SPECIES

Villous Mint-bush

Prostanthera densa

Vulnerable

Villous mint-bush is an erect mint-smelling shrub that can grow up to one to two metres tall. Its branches and leaves are covered with long, spreading hairs. The name villous refers to these hairy, almost velvety, leaves. The leaves are usually in pairs and almost triangular in shape, extending to 15 millimetres in length and 12 millimetres wide. They are dark green above and paler below, with curled-under edges.

The tubular flowers are mauve with orange markings and grow in the angles where the leaves meet the stems. Flowering occurs year-round.

Villous mint-bush grows in sclerophyll forest and shrubland on coastal headlands and near coastal ranges, chiefly on sandstone, and rocky slopes near the sea. Plants regenerate from seed and/or rootstock after fire and flower in their first year or two.

Villous mint-bush has been recorded near Jervis Bay and in the Port Stephens area. In the Sydney region, there are some recordings in the Royal National Park and small numbers have been found

at Bass and Flinders Point in Cronulla. Saving our Species is funding translocations and surveys to look for more villous mint-bush.

Mount Annan Botanic Garden decided that the rare and threatened villous mint-bush was so beautiful that it deserved to be more widely available.

Working with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Mount Annan's team of dedicated botanists has been able to propagate the plant. *Prostanthera* 'Mint Velvet' is now available for sale at the Garden Shops as well as good native nurseries.

There are only two places in Sydney where villous mint-bush has been found – in the Royal National Park and across the water in Cronulla.

Villous mint-bush is susceptible to extinction because of development pressures and its small population size and restricted distribution.

Support local action and help save the villous mint-bush



Prostanthera densa, Villous mint-bush flower.
Photo: Carly Leeson/Volunteer



Angela Smithers, Bushcare volunteer with villous mint-bush seedling. Photo: Rosemary Prior/DPIE

There are many ways you can help save threatened species like the villous mint-bush:

- The Sutherland Shire bushcare group works to save the villous mint-bush, contact them or your local bushcare group to look after native vegetation in your area.
- Make sure you don't grow plants in your garden which can become weeds in nearby bushland, such as agapanthus, asparagus fern and fishbone fern. Tell your family and friends if you see these and other invasive plants in their garden.
- When walking or riding bikes in the bush, stick to the path and make sure you don't damage native plants.

Remember to wash the soil from your footwear when returning from walks in the bush to avoid spreading plant diseases such as *Phytophthora*.

If you are keen to know about volunteering and research projects related to threatened species, you can find more information here:

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/threatened-species/help-save-our-threatened-species



Kevin Seymour (Sutherland Shire Council), Liza Schaeper (DPIE), Dr Trevor Wilson with Villous mint-bush seedling (RBG/Mt Annan), Ian Radosavljevic (DPIE), Michael Wood (NPWS). Photo: Rosemary Prior/DPIE

Saving our Species is a NSW Government flagship program targeting on-ground action to secure threatened plants and animals from extinction. The program aims to increase the number of species that can survive securely in the wild.

Saving our Species can only succeed if we work together. We need your support to ensure that today's actions help to secure the future of NSW's threatened species.

To find out more about threatened species in NSW and the Saving our Species program: www.environment.nsw.gov.au/SOS