

Rare plants of the APY Lands

Lepidosperma avium

Desert Rush



Photos: Dave Albrecht

Description:

Lepidosperma avium is a large, long-lived multi-stemmed sedge growing 1.2-2.4 m high. It has stiff, cylindrical leaves 2-4 mm wide that are green to chocolate brown in colour. The flower head is fan-shaped, consisting of numerous slender dark spikes. Fruits are brown three-sided nuts, 3-3.5 mm long.



Government of
South Australia

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Distribution and ecology:

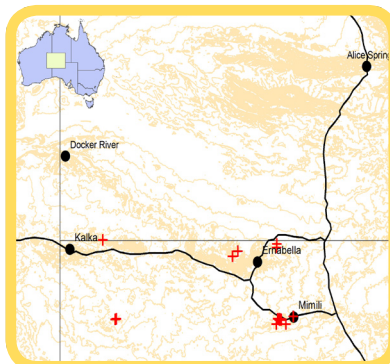
Known to occur in the Everard, Musgrave, Birksgate, and Mann Ranges. There is also a single record from Dalhousie Springs.

Population size is unclear. It is widespread in the Everard Ranges but is small and fragmented in the Musgrave and Mann Ranges.

Plants grow on rocky hill-sides, usually at the base of large granitic rock slabs. It favours well watered refuge areas and is associated with fire-sensitive plant communities.

Status:

Rare in South Australia



Map of distribution

Threats to survival:

- Fire
Increased fire frequency is the greatest threat to the species, mainly because of the potential soil loss when heavy rainfall occurs in recently burnt habitat.
- Spinifex
Encroachment into populations increases frequency of fire.

What Anangu can do:

- Reduce fuel loads in areas close to known populations by conducting cool-season burning.
- Re-survey monitoring sites every year to see what is happening to the populations.
- Keep an eye out for the species so that additional populations may be located.