

Threatened species of the Northern Territory

George Gill range cliff-bush

Amperea spicata

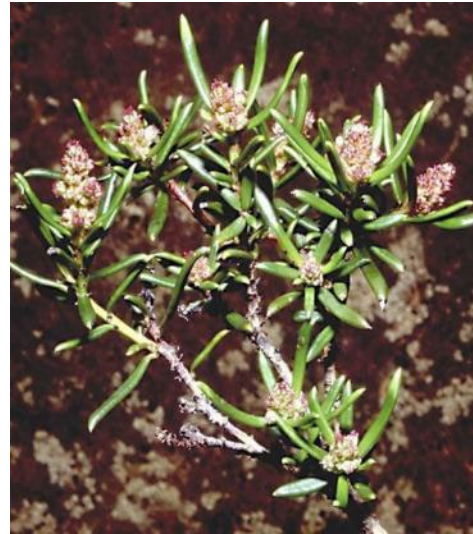
Conservation status

Australia: Not listed

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Northern Territory: Vulnerable

Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976



Credit: D. Albrecht

Description

Amperea spicata is a small shrub to about 30 cm high. The leaves are concentrated towards the end of the branchlets, linear to oblanceolate with strongly recurved margins, 7-33 mm long and 0.8-2 mm wide, glabrous above and inconspicuously papillose below. Male and female flowers are separate but occur on the same plant, each with four to five small perianth segments to 2 mm long. Fruit is a glabrous capsule 1.5-2.5 mm long and wide.

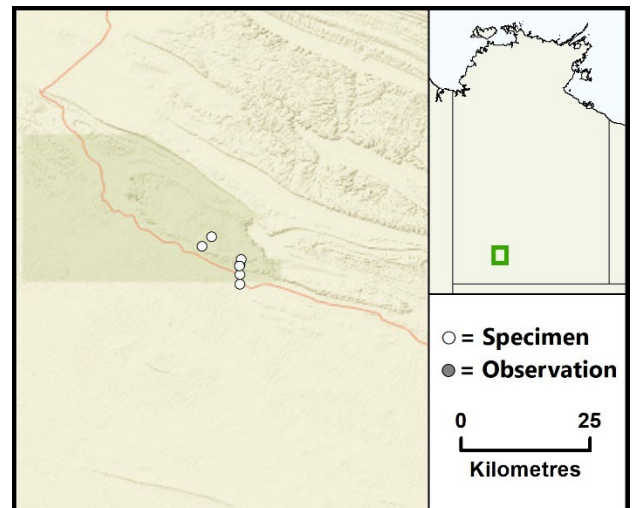
Flowering: recorded in June and August.

Fruiting: recorded in October.

Distribution

Amperea spicata is endemic to the Northern Territory (NT) where it is known only from Watarrka National Park. Records indicate that the species is restricted to the catchments of Stokes and Kathlene Creeks¹.

NT conservation reserves where reported:
Watarrka National Park.



Caption: Known locations of the George Gill Range Cliff-bush in the NT (nrmaps.nt.gov.au)

Ecology and life-history

Amperea spicata occurs in the deeply incised (gorge) sections of creeks where it is confined to rock crevices on sheltered sandstone cliffs.

Threatening processes

There are no known past or present specific threats to this species. However, the very restricted area of occupancy and small number of locations render the species prone to the effects of stochastic events such as disease, fire and hotter drought due to climate change. Further, the highly invasive species, Buffel Grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*), occurs in both the Stokes and Kathleen catchments, and has the potential to cause a decline in habitat quality due to changed fire and increased competition for space and resources.

Conservation objectives and management

Further survey is required to confirm the distribution and size of the total population. A monitoring program should be established to track changes in population size and habitat health over time. The risk of fire and Buffel grass invasion should be regularly assessed.

References

¹ Henderson, R.J.F. 1992. Studies in Euphorbiaceae A.L.Juss., sens. lat. I. A revision of *Amperea* Adr. Juss. (Acalyphoideae Ascherson, Ampereae Muell. Arg.) *Aust. J. Bot.* 5: 1-27.