



Chrysocephalum apiculatum



photo: L. Oliver

Chrysocephalum apiculatum (formerly *Helichrysum apiculatum* [11]) is a variable and sometimes bushy perennial herb 7–60 cm high. The branches matted with woolly hairs with underlying glandular hairs [9]. *Chryso* means golden and *cephalum* means a head, in Greek [12]; *apiculatum* means shortly-pointed [16]. Common names are Golden Buttons [12], Common Everlasting [14] or Yellow Buttons [8].

Population map:

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

Natural Populations

Chrysocephalum apiculatum occurs in all states of Australia [12]. It is most common in grasslands and open sites on the edges of woodlands or heathlands [10] on a range of soil types. With such a broad distribution, it is not surprising that this species varies considerably in form, from a sparse erect plant up to 60 cm in height and with narrow leaves to much lower sprawling plants with fleshy leaves 1 cm wide [11].

Flowering and Seeds

C. apiculatum flowers mostly from spring to autumn [4, 9, 12] but occasionally throughout the year. The flowers are golden-yellow [11]. Seeds are small, fine, warty and crowned with a tuft of 5-12 golden feathery bristles [8].

Fruits (achenes) are tightly clustered in the old dried flower heads. Each head contains many achenes that loosen in the head and develop a fluffy appearance as they mature. At maturity the individual achenes release easily from the seedhead. Each achene has a feathery attachment called a pappus [2].

Collect light dry seed after flowering before it disperses [1]. Seed can be

collected by hand into large paper bags then allowed to dry, or small portable vacuum cleaners have also been used for collection [2]. Store seed in paper bags [1]. Seed handling involves breaking up the seedheads, then sieving to remove any large material. Keep dry and add small amount of insecticide to collected material before storing [2, 6].

Do not collect the seed in wet weather or after rain, as the seed readily retains moisture, and can develop fungal problems [2]. Seed retains viability for several years [3].

The great variation in form and structure observed in *C. apiculatum* suggests that there may well be several species included within the complex [11]. This means that when collecting or sourcing seed for restoration or propagation, it is recommended that local variation is taken into account and that where possible, local seed sources are used from populations with similar forms.

Cultivation and Uses

C. apiculatum can be propagated from cuttings taken at any time of the year [11] or seed; however cuttings seem to be more reliable [12] and produce plants, which are true to form [11]. Some forms spread by suckering [12].

Seed can be sown fresh or after a few months storage. Sow from mid winter to early spring and cover seeds with a small amount of sand or fine gravel [6]. Plants germinate in 2-4 weeks [1].

This species is suitable for direct seeding [1].

C. apiculatum is commonly used in horticulture and landscaping [4], and is a good pioneer plant [15].

It will grow in semi shade but prefers full sun and well-drained soils [12, 14]. It is drought tolerant [12] and tolerates moderately salty winds [14], and most forms are frost hardy [15]. Plants growing close to large trees tend to be more sparse than those in the open but still provide a good

ground cover [11].

This is a hardy plant suitable for rockeries or steep slopes, bare or disturbed sites [7, 13 14]. It can be used in massed plantings, scattered among other plants or grown in containers [10]. The stems occasionally form roots where they touch the ground, though only in the most favourable conditions, and the plant is unlikely to become a nuisance [11]. Plants may die back in dry conditions and reshoot after rain [5, 7, 8].

C. apiculatum was used by European settlers to kill intestinal worms in stock [7]. The plants are regarded as being moderately to very palatable to stock and are often utilized heavily during the autumn months when other forage is in short supply [5]. Overgrazing leads to elimination of the plants from pasture [1, 5, 7].

Nectar in the flowers is a food source for butterflies, eg. *Vanessa kershawi*, the painted-lady butterfly [16].

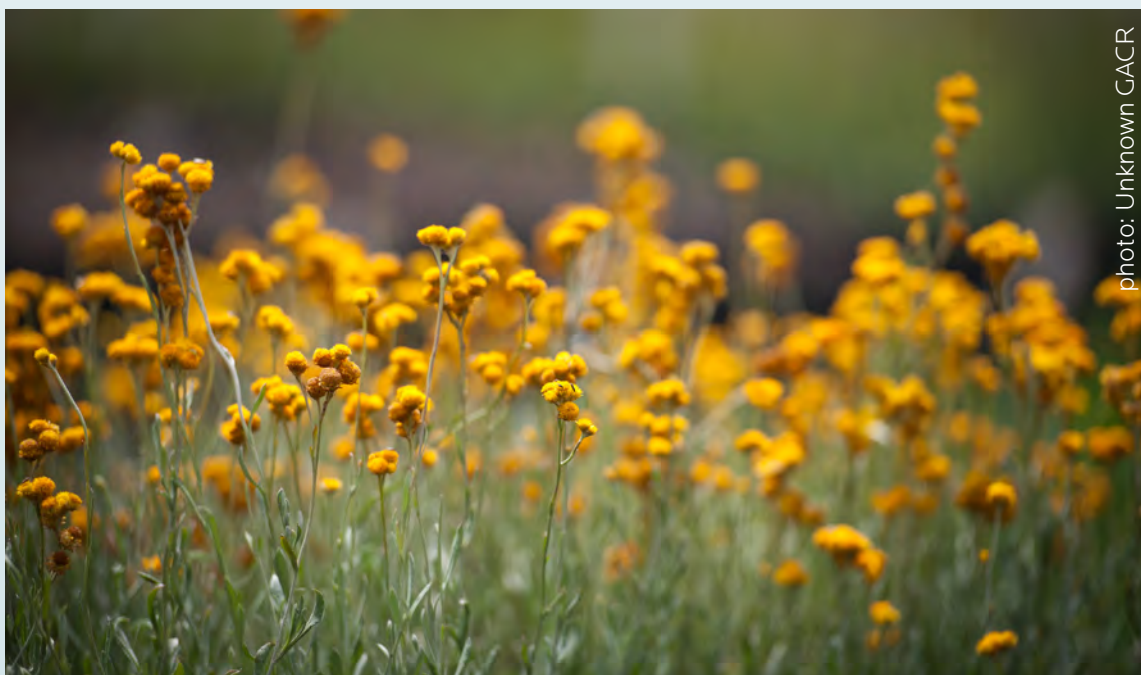


photo: Unknown GACR

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] Ralph, M. (1993). *Seed Collection of Australian Native Plants For Revegetation, Tree Planting and Direct Seeding*. 2nd ed. Fitzroy, Victoria: Bushland Horticulture.
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- [4] Eddy, D., Mallinson, D., Rehwinkel, R. and Sharp, S. (1998). *Grassland Flora, a field guide for the Southern Tablelands (NSW&ACT)*. Canberra, ACT.
- [5] 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.
- [6] Bonney, N. (2003). *What Seed Is That? A field guide to the identification, collection and germination of native seed in South Australia*. Tantanoola, SA: Neville Bonney.
- [7] Stelling, F. (ed.) (1998). *South West Slopes Revegetation Guide*. Murray Catchment Management Committee, Albury, NSW.
- [8] Walker, K., Burrows, G., and McMahon, L. (2001). *Bidgee Bush, An identification guide to common native plants species of the South Western Slopes of New South Wales*. Greening Australia, South West Slopes.

Internet links

- [9] PlantNET National Herbarium of New South Wales: <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=s&p&name=Chrysocephalum~apiculatum>
- [10] Botanic Gardens Trust: http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/annan/the_garden/blooming_calendar/chrysocephalum_apiculatum
- [11] Australian National Botanic Gardens website: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/gnp13/chrysocephalum-apiculatum.html>
- [12] Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne website: http://www.rbgs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/6811/Plant_sheet.pdf
- [13] Common Local Native Species of the Adelaide Plains: http://www.nps.sa.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/local_native_plants_brochure__jun07.pdf
- [14] Native Seeds Pty Ltd.: <http://www.nativeseeds.com.au/categories.asp?cID=95&c=17303>
- [15] Australian National Botanic Gardens & Australian National Herbarium, Harden Species List: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/greening-grainbelt/harden-species-list.xls>
- [16] Friends of Black Hill and Morialta Incorporated website: <http://www.fobhm.org/noframes/chrysocephalum.htm>