

Small Purple-pea Search Guide

Help us find the Small Purple-pea (*Swainsona recta*)

Central Tablelands Local Land Services, with the support of the Australian Government's National Landcare Program are seeking your help in their 'Search for Swainsona' – a project to locate new populations of the nationally endangered Small Purple-pea. This beautiful plant has suffered the loss of its woodland habitat across the Central Tablelands and together with your support, we are hoping to secure its survival into the future. If you think you might have seen this plant, please contact us! All sightings of the species are important and will allow us to care for the Small Purple-pea in our region.

Identifying the Small Purple-pea

Small Purple-peas can grow to 30 cm tall when flowering. The leaves are almost hairless and divided into up to six pairs of 10 mm long, very narrow leaflets, each with a pointed tip. There is also a single leaflet at the end of each divided leaf. The Small Purple-pea flowers between late September and early November, with each plant bearing one or more sprays of purple flowers. Plants are easiest to see and identify during flowering but as they can be very small, they are often missed when they occur individually or in only small populations.

The Small Purple-pea occurs predominantly in grassy woodlands with trees such as Blakely's Red Gum, Yellow Box, Long-leaved Box and White Box. In the Mudgee - Wellington area Black Cypress Pine is often also present. The native understorey at known sites is dominated by Kangaroo Grass, Snow Grass and Spear Grass, however, the species appears to prefer sites where the competition with grasses is limited and plants are often found growing in small patches of bare ground or light litter. Occasionally the understorey may have a low shrub component including the Showy Wattle and the Sticky Daisy-bush.



The flowers and leaves of the Small Purple-pea. Note the very fine, hairless leaves.

They often grow in patches of multiple individuals, so if a purple flower is spotted, look closely and you may see young, non-flowering plants close by.

We are also interested in locations of the vulnerable Silky Swainson-pea. This plant is stockier and a lot hairier than the Small Purple-pea. Additionally, its flowers are 'crown-like', located at the end of the flower stalk.



Silky Swainson-pea with silky, silver leaves. Silky Swainson-pea (left) and Small Purple-pea (right) growing together in the Mudgee Common.

Reporting a sighting of the Small Purple-pea

If you think you may have encountered a Small Purple-pea (or any similar species that you are uncertain of), please follow the below steps to help us positively identify and record any new locations.

- Take a photo of the plant. Ideally, please take a photo of the flowering stalk and a photo of the leaves, as well as a photo of the whole plant showing a little of the surrounds where it is found.
- Mark the location via Apple Maps or Google Maps (if you have a smart phone with you). Apple Maps lets you mark a location by tapping on it, while Google maps allows you to share your location or mark it as a parking spot (temporary only). From there you can share your location via message or email. Alternatively, record the location as accurately as possible to help us find the plant again.
- Text or email your photos and location to 0427 637 907 or evelyn.nicholson@lls.nsw.gov.au - where possible, include a description of where you have found the plant. The more detail provided, the easier it will be to relocate the plant in the future.

For further information on the Small Purple-pea, please contact:

- Evelyn Nicholson - 0427 637 907 or evelyn.nicholson@lls.nsw.gov.au
- Colleen Farrow - 0438 867 249 or colleen.farrow@lls.nsw.gov.au

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For updates go to www.lls.nsw.gov.au

