

## West Coast Mintbush *Prostanthera calycina*

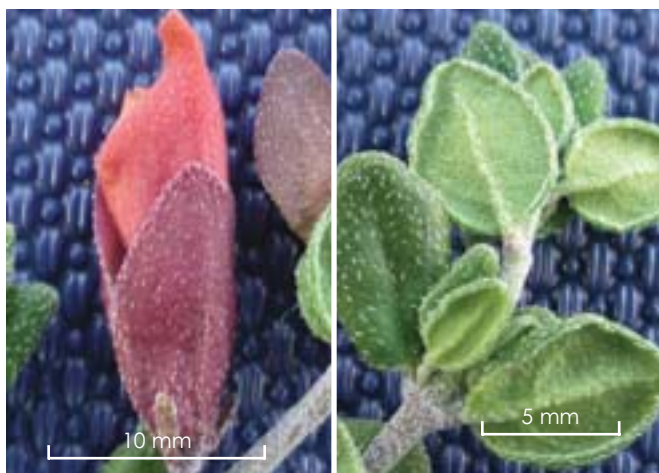
Vulnerable

### Description

West Coast Mintbush, also known as Limestone Mintbush, is a spreading perennial shrub that grows to 0.5 m tall with:

- dark green leaves, which smell of mint when crushed
- red, tube-shaped flowers, about 2 cm long, with petals opening out
- a maroon (or sometimes green) outer envelope (calyx) enclosing each flower.

West Coast Mintbush is distinguished from other mintbush species by microscopic hairs (0.3-0.4 mm long), which grow on the surface of the branches and leaves.



Left: Flowers of the West Coast Mintbush showing maroon outer calyx  
Right: Leaves of the West Coast Mintbush showing microscopic hairs

### Ecology

West Coast Mintbush flowers between September and December. The species' fruiting and seeding requires further study. Pollination processes, seed dispersal mechanisms and germination triggers are currently unknown.

### Distribution

West Coast Mintbush is endemic to Eyre Peninsula - it is found nowhere else in the world. The plant has a scattered distribution from Buckleboo to Coorabie, with the majority of known populations concentrated on limestone outcrops between Lock, Venus Bay and Streaky Bay.

### Habitat

West Coast Mintbush grows on limestone ridges and in mallee vegetation on sandy-loam soils.

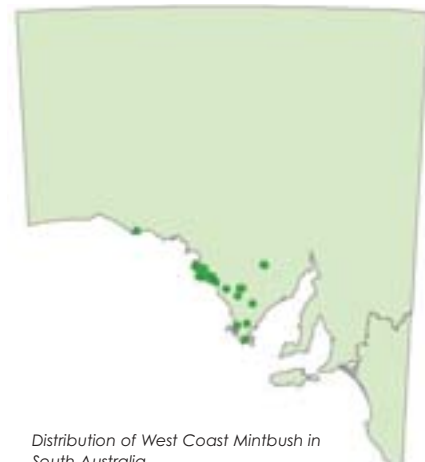
Overstorey plants that are commonly associated with West Coast Mintbush include:

- Ridge-fruited Mallee *Eucalyptus incrassata*
- Red Mallee *Eucalyptus oleosa*
- Beaked Red Mallee *Eucalyptus socialis*.

West Coast Mintbush is also frequently found with understorey plants such as *Melaleuca* species, Native Apricot, Quandong, *Grevillea*, *Hakea* and *Spyridium*.



West Coast Mintbush habitat in Venus Bay Conservation Park



Distribution of West Coast Mintbush in South Australia

## Conservation rating

West Coast Mintbush is listed nationally as Vulnerable to extinction because it has a restricted distribution and fragmented habitat.

<b>Vulnerable</b>	<b>Endangered</b>	<b>Critically Endangered</b>	<b>Extinct</b>
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## Threats

Species that are threatened often live in less than ideal situations, where various processes affect their ability to survive and reproduce.

Grazing pressure from kangaroos, rabbits and livestock is thought to be the greatest immediate threat to West Coast Mintbush. High grazing pressure reduces seed set and survival of seedlings.

Serious threats to West Coast Mintbush include:



## Recovery

West Coast Mintbush is included in a recovery plan for threatened plants, which outlines strategies to prevent the species from becoming extinct.

The recovery goal is to downlist West Coast Mintbush from Vulnerable to Near Threatened. Recovery objectives include:

- obtaining baseline information and determining critical and potential habitat
- reducing the risk of catastrophic events impacting on populations
- improving community and stakeholder awareness and involvement in West Coast Mintbush recovery
- improving habitat quality, for example, by controlling grazing animals or weeds
- monitoring West Coast Mintbush populations/habitat and evaluating the success of recovery actions.



West Coast Mintbush in flower

## How you can help

Everyone can be involved in helping to save threatened species. Please be aware of native plants and help preserve them by:

- preventing damage caused by grazing animals
- controlling weeds to reduce competition
- preventing removal of native plants by land clearance and illegal collection
- taking photos instead of picking native flowers
- joining your local Landcare, Friends of Parks, or similar group and looking after a threatened plant population
- reporting any new sightings of West Coast Mintbush to the Threatened Flora Officer, so they can be added to the statewide database and used in future management of the species.

## Further reading

Freebairn, A & Pobke, K 2006, *Draft Recovery Plan for 25 Threatened Plant Taxa on Eyre Peninsula*, Department for Environment and Heritage, Port Lincoln.

## Further information

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