

Conostylis candicans subsp. *calpicola*

Hopper

COASTAL COTTONTAIL

Flowering period: August–November.

Description: Tufted, grass-like perennial herb to 40 cm high, leaves linear, silvery-grey, softly hairy, to 10 cm long, arising from a compact underground rhizome. Flowers yellow, in dense clusters on 30 cm long, often lax stems. Plants resprout after fire although some forms, particularly under cultivation, may form aerial stems supporting terminal shoots that are incapable of resprouting. Seeds small and brown produced in abundance usually in December–January. In disturbed sites seed production is often very low due to high levels of insect predation.

Pollination: Open pollinated by a variety of insect species.

Distribution: Widespread and locally common in near-coastal areas from Geraldton to Bunbury. Requires full sun positions and is found in protected areas in frontal dunes and throughout secondary dunes, usually in areas of low heath.

Propagation: Propagates readily from seed that has been treated with diluted smoke water or sown into seedling mix that is subsequently treated with aerosol smoke. Seedlings can be pricked out after 6–8 weeks and grown on for transplanting to restoration sites in winter.

Uses in restoration: A useful species for stabilising dunes in semi-protected sites due to the sand-binding nature of the highly ramifying root system. May be used to enrich local dune restoration programs and is particularly attractive with the silver-grey, grass-like foliage complementing the yellow flower heads.

Notes: This species is sometimes confused with *Conostylis setigera* with which *C. candicans* will often hybridise. *C. candicans* has entire leaf margins lacking the fine, rigid hairs found in *C. setigera*. An endemic genus that is closely related to the iconic Western Australian kangaroo paws. Use only locally collected species in restoration programs to protect local genetic values and adaptive advantage. A highly useful species for the home garden and since the discovery of smoke application for Australian species by Kings Park scientists has become a widespread and common plant in landscaping. Plant is highly drought resistant and useful in water-wise gardens. Plant in clumps to maximise the striking impact of silver foliage with yellow flower heads; however, it may be susceptible to haemodorum rust disease (rusty striping of leaves) when grown under humid conditions.



Habit



Flowers



Habit



Distribution