



Omphalea Celata

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Conservation Status

Queensland State: **Vulnerable**

Australian Government: **Vulnerable**

Species and status overview

Omphalea celata is a small tree with drooping branches that occurs along watercourses with steep sided gullies on granitic or heavily weathered metamorphic soils. *O. celata* has also been recorded in semi-evergreen vine thicket and vine forest.

In the Mackay, Whitsunday and surrounding regions the species has been recorded in the following areas:

- Gloucester Island
- Hazlewood Gorge near Eungella
- Cooper Creek near Homevale Station

The main potential threats to *Omphalea celata* include invasion by exotic weeds, such as *Lantana camara*, and damage to plant habitat from landslides.

Description

O. celata grows to 12 m with shiny, cream coloured bark. The leaves are dark grey-green on the upper surface and pale grey-green below, approximately 5-12 cm long and 2-8 cm wide. The leaves are softly textured. Separate male and female flowers are borne on the same plant though the male flowers greatly outnumber the female. Flowers of both sexes lack petals and appear from June to December. This species has been recorded flowering in November – December, February – May and July. The fruit is green with two or three lobes and fruiting occurs from December to February.



Cool facts: O. celata is the host-plant for the native Australian day-flying Zodiac Moth. This fascinating moth has an amazing courting ritual. Males and females fly together approximately a foot apart, flitting together, touching then flitting apart again repeatedly. All whilst flying backwards!

Conservation concerns

Threats:

- Invasion by exotic weeds such as *Lantana camara*
- Plant damage from landslide at the Hazlewood Gorge population

What can I do?

- Manage and prevent the establishment of weeds such as *Lantana* in areas of known populations
- Control erosion and stabilise banks of water courses and gullies

Photo credits: Steve and Alison Pearson