

## Fabaceae

### *Cullen tenax*

emu foot or scurf-pea

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#### ETYMOLOGY

(Cullen) After William Cullen (1710-1790), a Scottish physician and chemist who lectured at the University of Glasgow on botany, The species tenax (TEN-nax) from latin tenacious tough; describing the strong leaf fibres used for cordage;

#### LIFEFORM

Creeper 10cm x 1m long

#### STATUS

Endangered in Victoria under Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (FFG) Now rare on Keilor basalt plains; Throughout the SE Qld districts in variety of habitats; Tara, Elliot Heads Qld to NSW, Werribee St Albans, Vic, SA

#### OCCURS

#### HABITAT

Grassland, open forest

#### LEAVES

Alternate, 1-6 cm x 1.5-5 mm, linear-lanceolate, digitate 3-5 leaflets, palmately arranged, dark green on 4-10 cm stalks;

#### FLOWERS

Pea-shaped, 5 mm, bluish purple along 3-10 cm spikes; **Flowering times** All year

#### FRUIT

Pods, 4 x 2.5 mm, oval plump hairless fruit are wrinkled black when ripe; Seeds charcoal to black dull kidney-shaped very rough surface; **Fruiting times** Dec, Jan

#### ROOTS

Woody rootstock; Stems compact hairless or sparsely covered with minute hairs;

#### STEM

Slender weak stemmed spreading branches prostrate creeper;

#### ETHNOBOTANY

Very palatable good fodder, Nitrogen fixer self-pollinating nodulates;

#### NATIVE BEES

Flowers visited by *Megachile mystaceana* (fire-tailed resin bee)

#### BUTTERFLY

*Lampides boeticus* tailed pea blue, *Papilio demoleus* chequered swallowtail (seen), *Zizina labradus* common grass-blue

#### ID FEATURE

Leaflets 3-7 per leaf stalk; blades entire, subtending; Inflorescences palmately 4-5-foliolate calyx in fruit becoming broadly campanulate, exposing the fruit;