

# VINC need your help to conserve an endangered plant species.

## January 2017 update



At VINC we are passionate about indigenous plants and ecosystems and we work hard towards conserving our local flora through their propagation and supply. However, as the impacts of urbanisation - such as weed incursion and habitat loss - increase, we are rapidly losing populations of a number of species which support biodiversity.

### *What is the project?*

Arching (or Fragrant) Flax Lily – *Dianella sp. aff. longifolia (Benambra)*, is not only critically endangered locally within the Cities of Boroondara and Yarra, but is also endangered throughout Victoria. It was once widespread throughout grasslands on the volcanic plains but now is uncommon. Easterly populations have fared worse; only 3 tiny populations within Boroondara and Yarra remain. The nectar of this species is an important food source for native bees, and the berries provide food for lizards and birds. Although an important species for local biodiversity, the few remaining populations are isolated from one another, severely restricting the movement of wildlife, some of which are key pollinators. Genetic diversity is a key component of the long term survival of population of species in order to allow adaptation to future conditions.

While we often engage in conservation projects of local species, some projects are beyond our capacity. In the case of the Arching Flax Lily, seed ripens successively, therefore each site needs to be visited multiple times to capture the full genetic diversity of a population. With a limited budget for seed collection, capturing the total gene pool of local populations is difficult without support. With a good seed year looming, we hope to embark on a project to capture the entire local gene pool of the Arching Flax Lily. The aim is to collect enough seed to produce and plant at least 350 seedlings into one or more recipient sites, there-by creating healthy seed orchard/s for collections in future years. The likely donor site/s, occur within City of Boroondara's boundaries and already serve as important wildlife corridors. The plants will be managed by local council biodiversity teams into the future.

### *Why we need your help*

We sell Arching Flax-lily tubestock for comparatively high rates yet despite this, we have calculated that VINC still loses \$2.85 for every plant produced. Although we rely on profitable lines to support our specialised biodiversity activities, a project of this scope is beyond our financial capabilities. So to achieve this, we are seeking financial help in the way of tax-deductable donations from our members.

### *January 2017 update*

A big thank you to those who have donated money to our little plant conservation project. We were seeking \$1k to assist us with field search, seed collection, propagation and record keeping. I'm thrilled to say that we have achieved this and in fact, have eclipsed it by almost \$200 :)

Our seed collector and I, with local council assistance, have already catalogued all known populations. During our journey, we discovered a single remnant plant growing in Canterbury and we can now add this to our small list of known naturally occurring populations growing in the inner eastern suburbs.

There's probably less than 50 wild plants left within the area we're working in - a range of approximately 30 square km's. Your funding is already helping bring these genetic fragments together; our hope is to build a couple of genetically healthy populations for the sustainable harvest of local seed in revegetation projects for many years to come. In addition, it will provide local biodiversity with a huge boost.

With additional funds, we will try to grow more plants than originally projected. This aim is particularly pertinent right now because there seems to be a pest attacking flowers and fruit in populations throughout Melbourne, causing them to abort before seed develops. We're not sure what it is but we suspect a sap-sucking pest like mites. This is an unwanted problem for an already critically endangered species but we hope to rise to that challenge.

We did not receive many emails requesting a receipt for tax deductible donations. If you'd like one, please let us know and we'll forward one to you.

Thanks again, and we will keep you informed with our progress!

Sincerely,  
Mark and Naomie -  
On behalf of the VINC Team and Environment Fund Committee

