

Media Release:

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## Lost in the desert for 135 years but found alive

A Botanists' recent field trip to the Territory's far south-west revealed a seemingly lost species, a completely new species, a now-rare species and a burgeoning species amongst other findings.

Alice Springs Desert Park Nursery Manager Tim Collins said the seemingly lost Daisy Bush, *Olearia arida*, had not been seen in the Territory since 1873 when Ernest Giles reached Mount Olga (Kata Tjuta).

"Now that the Daisy Bush has been rediscovered we're propagating it for display and further study at the Alice Springs Desert Park," Mr Collins said.

The team of Botanists undertook the extensive plant survey and collected cuttings of specimens in the Petermann and Mann Ranges, an area where little is known of the distribution of flora.

"We also collected cuttings of a species of Wattle, *Acacia tenuior*, which was previously not known to occur in the Territory before, and found that the Quandong Tree, *Santalum acuminatum*, is now extremely rare in the region," Mr Collins said.

"Another great find was large populations of the wattle species, *Acacia pachyacra*, and the Woolly Plover Daisy, *Leiocarpa tomentosa*, which prior to this survey our knowledge was very limited in terms of their conservation value.

"The survey also saw numerous examples of camels selectively grazing species of trees such as the Desert Poplar, *Codonocarpus cotinifolius*, Native Apricot, *Pittosporum angustifolium* and Bush Plum, *Santalum lanceolatum*.

"Other potential threats to the ecosystems observed on the field trip include weeds and wild-fires.

"We failed to find a rare Teatree, *Melaleuca fulgens*, despite searching for it in its previously recorded location and it is presumed to have been destroyed by wild-fires.

The research team consisted of Botanists from the Alice Springs Herbarium, Alice Springs Desert Park and a Senior Traditional Owner of the Petermann Aboriginal Land Trust.

Ends

**Media Note – for more information contact Tim Collins on 8951 8757**

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