



## SIGNIFICANT FLORA FACT SHEET

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of Salt Pipewort is its  
uniqueness and rarity.

## SALT PIPEWORT

*Eriocaulon carsonii* (all sub-species)

Salt Pipewort is a wetland herbaceous plant species, forming low mats a few centimetres high. In South Australia it is restricted to the discharge areas around some mound springs of the Great Artesian Basin where the soil is perennially wet and saline.

The main significance of Salt Pipewort is its uniqueness and rarity. In South Australia it is the only member of the *Eriocaulon* genus – a group of plants consisting of more than 400 species primarily of tropical or subtropical origin – and it is rated as threatened or vulnerable on both State and Australian Government registers.



Crazed habitat  
P. Lang



### IDENTIFICATION

This unique herb is invariably found with a prostrate or mat-forming growth habit. Leaves are fleshy and pipe-like (cylindrical and hollow), about 1-5cm long, up to 1cm wide, and bright green.

### DISTRIBUTION

Salt Pipewort occurs around only a few of the 50-odd mound spring complexes in the Lake Eyre region of South Australia. Salt Pipewort also occurs in the mound springs and other groundwater springs as far north as the base of Cape York in Queensland.

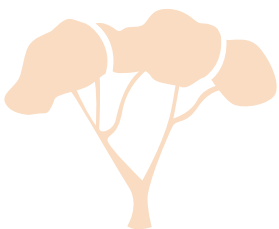
As a wetlands species, Salt Pipewort favours the tails of active springs, where the discharged water has partly evaporated and soils, though permanently wet, are becoming saline.

Observations suggest that Salt Pipewort cannot compete with taller wetland species (eg *Phragmites*), which occur nearer the discharge point in less saline wetland environments.

Salt Pipewort will increase where light grazing pressure from herbivores (eg kangaroos and cattle) keeps the area free of these larger wetland plants.

Soils in the areas where Salt Pipewort occurs are organic gypseous soils and muds for the most part, tending sandy in some springs.

There are only one or two localities where the Salt Pipewort occurs over more than a few hundred square metres. It is not known from any wetlands associated with surface drainage features.





**Contact Us**

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**THREATS**

Any species restricted to the wetlands of mound springs is vulnerable to the grazing and trampling effects of stock but also to the vagaries of the flow regimen of the particular spring.

The discharge location for some mound springs can vary over time resulting in desiccation of some of the associated wetlands.

Additionally the exploitation of the Great Artesian Basin aquifers has resulted in a general reduction in spring flow rates in some regions.

Reducing grazing pressure by fencing off the spring vegetation can cause larger rush species (eg *Phragmites* and *Typha*) to proliferate and take over the habitat previously occupied by the Salt Pipewort.

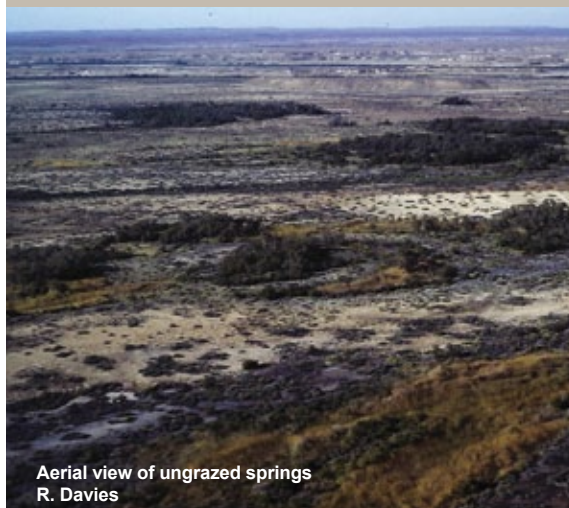
Selectively burning this vegetation can improve the survival outlook for Salt Pipewort which appears tolerant of moderate burns.



Clump *in situ*  
 Photograph by R. Davies



Uprooted plant  
 R. Davies



Aerial view of ungrazed springs  
 R. Davies



Flowers  
 R. Davies

