



Australian Government
Director of National Parks

MEDIA RELEASE

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RESCUE MISSION TO SAVE ONE OF NSW' RAREST PLANTS

A rescue mission has been launched on the South Coast, spearheaded by Booderee Botanic Gardens, to save one of New South Wales' rarest plants from extinction.

Booderee has joined forces with Landcare, Wollongong Botanic Gardens and the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra to collect and grow the first ever comprehensive greenhouse collection of the nationally-endangered Bomaderry zieria.

Booderee Park Manager, Scott Suridge said the small shrub, which looks like a boronia, is found nowhere in the world except Bomaderry Creek near Nowra.

"Since the Bomaderry zieria was first studied in detail a decade ago, numbers have dropped by 10 per cent – a real worry when you've got less than 1,200 of them in the entire world," Mr Suridge said.

"One of the 23 strains of the species is already extinct and others are teetering on the brink, so when local Landcare expert Terry Barratt recommended we launch a botanic gardens rescue mission we jumped straight on board."

Around 1,000 cuttings were taken from the wild plants in July and were sent to botanic gardens at Booderee, Woollongong and Canberra where they can be preserved, studied and even reintroduced to the wild if necessary.

"Our botanic gardens collections are really an insurance policy – if rabbits, drought or root disease threaten the wild population we'll have the stock to replant," Mr Suridge said.

"We'll also plant some of the cuttings in each of the botanic gardens, so visitors can come and enjoy this fascinating shrub for generations to come."

Terry Barratt from the Bomaderry Creek Landcare Group has carried out the only detailed study of the Bomaderry zieria, and he identified many of the different strains through genetic testing.

"This plant is really fascinating – it's lost the capacity to produce seeds, so to reproduce it has to send suckers up from the existing roots," Mr Barratt said.

"Now that we've got a reliable stock of plants in botanic gardens we can get stuck into studying it in more detail – it could be an interesting PhD project for an up and coming botanist!"

For more information visit www.booderee.gov.au

Media Contact: Scott Suridge, Booderee National Park (02) 4442 2207
Terry Barratt, Bomaderry Landcare (02) 4422 1211