

JULY 2017 UPDATE

In January's update, I mentioned an unknown pest that was attacking flowers and fruit of Dianella populations, including the rare Arching Flax Lily, across Melbourne. Although at the time we knew the problem was bad, we were still confident of collecting a healthy amount of genetically diverse seed from targeted remnant populations in Boroondara. Unfortunately, reality did not match our evidently optimistic expectations.

Under trying circumstances, collection went as well as it could. Fruit was unusually small and collection proved to be a big effort for the ultimately modest result. By mid-February, we had collected approximately 120 seeds from three areas during multiple outings. While the quantity was somewhat disappointing, the bigger frustration was the genetic range of material we had to work with; more than 95% of seed came from just one (largest) population.

Although we have a modest amount of seed on hand to produce plants with, the lack of genetic material has compromised our aim to establish diversely strong populations. We therefore decided to carry over the project for another 12 months. The current seed batches are being securely stored and we will undertake more collections next summer.

Our focus moving forward is to collect from the tiny populations that either bore little or no fruit last time, with an aim of proportionately representing (by way of follow-on production and supply of healthy tubestock), all remnant populations in the Boroondara area. We will keep you posted.

Cheers,
Mark & Naomie

Victorian Indigenous Nursery Co-op (VINC)

