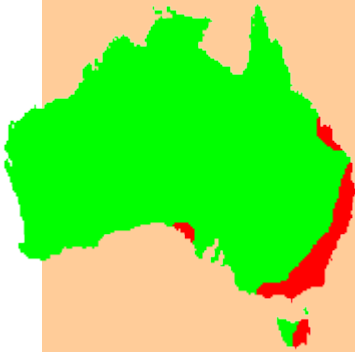


Comesperma ericinum



Family:	Polygalaceae
Distribution:	South-east Queensland, eastern New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia, usually in open forest or heath.
Common Name:	Heath milkwort; match heads
Derivation of Name:	<i>Comesperma</i> ... From Greek <i>come</i> , a hair and <i>sperma</i> , a seed (ie. hair-seed), referring to tufts of hair on the seed. <i>ericinum</i> ... similar to the genus <i>Erica</i> .
Conservation Status:	Not considered to be at risk in the wild.

General Description:

Comesperma is a genus of about 25 species all of which occur only in Australia. The genus is well developed in Western Australia where most species occur.



Comesperma ericinum

Photo: Brian Walters

Comesperma ericinum is a small, erect shrub to about 1 - 1.5 metres high. The leaves are narrowly oblong or linear, about 6 to 20 mm long by 1 to 4 mm wide with margins that may be curved under (recurved). The flowers occur in clusters towards the ends of the branches. Individually the flowers are small (5 to 10 mm long) and are usually mauve or purple although white forms are known. Flowering occurs mainly in spring but spasmodic flowering can occur at other times.

Although the best known member of the genus and an attractive plant when in flower, *C.ericinum* is not seen often in cultivation and it has proven to be difficult to maintain for long periods. The best chance of success appears to be in semi shaded, well drained conditions in sandy soils.

Propagation is reported to be successful from seed, without pre-treatment, although seed is rarely available. Cuttings from hardened, current season's will strike but the success rate is usually well below 100%.