

Grevillea sericea



Family: Proteaceae

Distribution: Forests and woodlands along the central coast of New South Wales, extending west as far as Mudgee.

Common Name: Silky grevillea

Derivation of Name: *Grevillea*...after Charles Francis Greville, co-founder of the Royal Horticultural Society
sericea...from Latin *sericeus*, silky, referring to the hairs on the underside of the leaves.

Conservation Status: Not considered to be at risk in the wild at the species level although subsp. *riparia* is classified as 2VC under the ROTAP * system due to its restricted distribution.

General Description:

Grevillea sericea is a well known species and is widely cultivated. There are two sub-species recognised:

- subsp. *sericea* - leaves usually less than 30 mm long; pink or white flowers
- subsp. *riparia* - leaves up to 120mm long; deep pink to purple flowers. This variety occurs generally along rivers and streams in the lower Blue Mountains west of Sydney.





Grevillea sericea subsp. *sericea* (top); *Grevillea sericea* subsp. *riparia*
(bottom)

Photos: Brian Walters

Grevillea sericea is usually a small to medium shrub from 1 to 2 metres high (subsp. *riparia* rarely exceeds 1 metre). The flowers occur in "spider" clusters on short branchlets from the main stems, are often prolific and occur over a long period from autumn through to spring.

Silky grevillea is popular in cultivation and succeeds in most temperate areas in soils of reasonable drainage. It prefers sunny or semi-shaded situations, responds well to pruning and is tolerant of at least moderate frosts. Some forms have a suckering habit which is never invasive. The species is an ideal size for average-sized gardens and, although it does not appear to attract honey-eating birds, native bees (as well as European honey bees) find the flowers very attractive. There is a popular hybrid form available known as "Colloroy Plateau" - this has *G.sericea* subsp.*sericea* and *G.speciosa* as its parents and has brilliant pink flower clusters.

The species can be grown from seed which should be "nicked" with a sharp knife prior to sowing to improve germination. Cuttings from firm, current season's growth usually strike reliably.

* ROTAP = Rare or Threatened Australian Plants (Briggs and Leigh, 1988)