

# “Federation Star” Flannel Flower

## *Actinotus helianthi*

### What is it?

*Actinotus helianthi* grow up to 1m tall and the silver-grey flowers, which appear in spring through late summer, have soft petals and green-grey leaves. Both felty, or flannel-like, in texture. The small silky hairs which create this texture are used to help protect the plant from heat and reduce the rate of moisture loss. Flowers, known as umbels, have tiny stalks and grow out from the same point, much like umbrella spokes. They are perennial and will produce new plants if the flowers are not removed. Pollination occurs by pollinators such as beetles and wasps (but not bees) and seeds are dispersed on the wind after the petals die back. Being shallow rooted, they dislike root disturbance and high winds and require good drainage to prevent disease. While *Actinotus* have a daisy-like flower in appearance, they are actually in the same family as carrots, celery and parsley.



*Actinotus helianthi* is the Centenary flower for NSW since it's selection in 1901 as part of the Centenary of Federation celebrations.

### Where do they occur?

Flannel flowers are able to grow in all areas of Australia except for the tropics, however *Actinotus helianthi* has a less wide-spread distribution, restricted to coastal and mountainous NSW, and higher altitude areas in southern Queensland and central Victoria. They are suited to full sun or semi-shade, and common in sandy soil, in pockets on rock shelves and sometimes surrounding seepage areas.

