

Acanthocarpus preissii

PRICKLE LILY

Lehm.

Flowering period: April–May.

Description: Grass-like, rhizomatous, tufted perennial plant to 1 m, often forming dense stands resulting from rhizome extensions that can establish daughter plants up to 30 cm from the parent plant. Leaves rigid, 5 cm long with a sharp, needle-like point. Flowers white with a brownish mid-rib, in sweetly scented axillary clusters produced in abundance along arching stems. Fruits are distinctive, yellowish, three-lobed, with a rough, spiky covering. Seeds spherical, orange-brown, three per fruit released in December by terminal splitting of the fruit lobes. Seeds have a somewhat oily outer covering surrounding a translucent seed.

Pollination: Open pollinated by small moths and other insect visitors.

Distribution: Widespread and locally common in near-coastal areas and inland where limestone dominates from Exmouth to Windy Harbour. Favours a wide range of soils from sandy to sandy clays and rocky sites. Able to cope with full exposure to protected swales even in deeply shaded sites.

Propagation: Although widespread and common, seed propagation is difficult and requires periods of warm, moist stratification followed by cool stratification (a process where seeds are exposed to variable temperatures) and then sowing in a free-draining seed mix. Seedling emergence takes up to six weeks with further germination over a period of weeks.

Uses in restoration: A highly useful species for foredune to tertiary dune sites, from exposed to protected sites and also for rocky sites. The clonal nature of the plant makes it ideal for primary establishment and consolidation purposes (but not in highly mobile sands as the clonal spread of the species is too slow – use spinifex in these sites). The prickly nature of the plant also acts to protect revegetation zones from trampling and the thick resistant nature of the leaves are not preferred by grazing animal including rabbits.

Notes: Further research is required to enable this species to be more readily available in restoration programs. On Rottnest Island, prickle lily dominates much of the vegetation due to its fire and grazing (quokka) resistance.



Habit



Flowers



Fruit with seed



Distribution