

## *Lepidosperma gladiatum* COAST SWORD-SEDGE

Labill.

**Flowering period:** November–January.

**Description:** Large, rhizomatous perennial sedge to 1.5 m high commonly forming large and extensive clumps. Leaves flattened, margins knife-like, convex on both sides up to 1.2 m long, erect in full sun or arching in shaded sites. Stems to 1.5 m high, terminated by a dense, black-brown flower head comprising several hundred flowers. Seeds nut-like, 3 mm long, held in the flower heads for some time, although protracted periods of retention leads to seeds losing their viability.

**Pollination:** Wind pollinated.

**Distribution:** Widespread and locally very common from Leeman to Cape Arid National Park. Grows in a wide variety of sites from full sun to shade and in frontal exposed sites on primary dunes to swales and peaks of secondary dunes. Can form expansive clumps over many square metres.

**Propagation:** By rhizome division of mother plants maintained under nursery conditions. Divide plants based on segments containing at least two years' growth (located by counting back from the lead shoot). Re-pot divisions directly into pots to be used in rehabilitation. Rhizome division is a reliable and effective method for propagation as seed has highly variable viability and low germination rates. A method developed by the noted landscaper Mrs Marion Blackwell involves divisions taken in winter that are directly transplanted to restoration sites. This technique was used to effectively restore sword-sedges on Garden Island.

**Uses in restoration:** A keystone species in restoration because of its vigorous growth, sand-binding root system and clonal habit. Plants also respond to some levels of sand burial and can be used as part of the stabilising approaches in exposed dunes.

**Notes:** A vigorous yet attractive sedge for the home garden. Copes both with full sun and shade conditions, and is often seen growing as attractive swards under weeping peppermint (*Agonis flexuosa*).



Habit



Flowers



Flowers



Distribution