

Xanthorrhoea preissii

GRASSTREE OR BALGA

Endl.

Flowering period: September–December.

Description: Trunk stout and wide in the coastal form reaching 2–3 m tall, though often only as high as the surrounding heath vegetation. Leaves in the coastal form are more robust and longer than the more inland form of the species, 2.5–3.5 mm wide, 1.2–1.5 m long. Flowering occurs usually in response to a disturbance like fire, or sporadically depending upon environmental conditions. Spike up to 3m long, with a short flowerless section at the base and densely packed flowers that open sequentially towards the apex, often commencing on the sunny side of the scape. The creamy white flowers open widely and produce a large nectar drop at the base of the spreading stamens. The fruits are prominent, hard and pointed, opening to release black, irregularly shaped seeds.

Pollination: Open pollinated by a wide variety of insects and birds providing an important and abundant nectar resource at flowering time.

Distribution: One of the most widespread and common plants in the south-west due to its resistance to fire and weed invasion, though in near-coastal areas is uncommon, becoming more common where soils are less alkaline further from the coast.

Propagation: Easily propagated from seed with the strong contractile roots on the seedling ‘self-burying’ so that the plant is pulled to the bottom of the pot. Can take many decades for a seedling to grow sufficiently to produce the above ground stem or caudex.

Uses in restoration: Used sparingly and rarely in near-coastal restoration as the species can be quite rare in reference communities. Can be common in old stable dunes some distance from the coast.

Notes: Slow growing but resilient species not often planted due to the slow growth and rarity in coastal ecosystems.



Habit



Flowers



Flowers



Distribution