

Banksia sessilis
var. cygnorum
 (Gand.) A.S.George

PARROT BUSH

Flowering period: June–September.

Description: Fire-sensitive (non-lignotuberous), tall shrub to small tree, 0.5–3 m high with erect, reddish stems when young and rigid, spiny leaves up to 10 cm long. Flowers in dense terminal heads on side branches, yellow. Seeds in beak-like capsules that split longitudinally to release two winged black seeds.

Pollination: Open pollinated by a wide variety of insects and nectar-seeking birds.

Distribution: From Geraldton to Mandurah, often locally common in limestone areas and in protected dune swales where the species can form dense, almost impenetrable thickets.

Propagation: Grown easily from seed sown in a free-draining seedling mix. Sow de-winged seeds direct into tubes to be used in restoration programs, burying individual seeds only as deep as the seed.

Uses in restoration: A species that provides a broad range of ecological services associated with the production over a long period of nectar-rich blossoms. However, it is also well known for its ability to become locally weedy if planted too densely or the site suffers repeated soil disturbance. Prefers protected areas, usually in swales or in secondary stable dunes.

WATCHPOINT: Do not use prunings of this species as stabilising material since seeds released from the cut stems can germinate large numbers of seedlings.

Notes: May be used as a bird-attracting species in the home garden where the plant is readily grown from seed directly planted to the site. The prickly leaves may be troublesome around young children.