

Pincushion Hakea

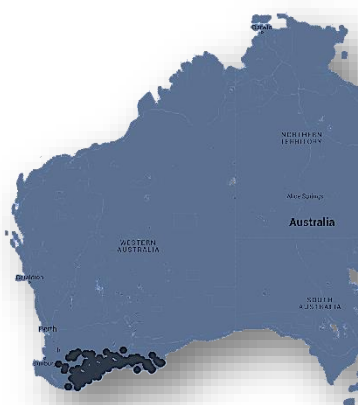
Hakea laurina

With flowers like these, what other name could you give this lovely small tree from the south-west of Western Australia? Mind you, it does have other local names, Kodjet, and Emu Bush, for example. Unlike most of our local species, the Pincushion Hakea has a broad, flattened, bluish-grey leaf, and its spectacular *flowers* are actually a ball of many, many individual small flowers, each with 4 crimson petals (*tepals*) which make up the 'cushion' and creamy white elongated styles and stigmas that make up the 'pins'.

Hakea, is an Australian endemic genus with its centre of diversity in the south-west of



Western Australia. This region, known as the **Kwongan**, is characterised by old, weathered nutrient poor, sandy and lateritic soils which generate a rich diversity of plants. It is recognised as the **Southwest Australian Floristic Region**, with 7380 native vascular plants, and of these, almost 50% are endemic. It is also known as the **Southwest Australia Global Diversity Hotspot**. The plant family **Proteaceae**, which includes *Hakea*, is of considerable significance in the Kwongan and other important Kwongan Proteaceae genera are *Banksia*,





Dryandra, *Adenanthos*, *Grevillea*, *Isopogon*, *Petrophile*, *Conospermum*, *Lambertia* and *Synaphea*. The Kwongan has a Mediterranean climate, (mild, warm, wet winters; hot, dry summers) and can be compared to the *Fynbos* of South Africa, the *Chaparral* of California and the *Maquis* of southern France.

The ability of Pincushion Hakea to survive hot and dry conditions makes this small tree a popular garden plant, not just in Australia, but in many countries of the world. It is widely grown in California. However, it may not survive the high humidity of eastern Australian summers. The seeds are much sought after by black cockatoos!



Map modified from Atlas of Living Australia:

http://biocache.ala.org.au/occurrences/search?q=lsid%3Aurn%3Aalsid%3Abiodiversity.org.au%3Aa pni.taxon%3A247982#tab_mapView

Hopper, SD, Gioia P. 2004. The Southwest Australian Floristic Region: Evolution and Conservation of a Global Hot Spot of Biodiversity. *Annu. Rev. Ecol. Evol. Syst.* 35:623-50

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