

## Plant of the Week

# *Banksia ericifolia* subspecies

# *ericifolia*

## The Heath-leaved Banksia

The Heath-leaved Banksia, *Banksia ericifolia*, is another of the original four *Banksia* species collected by Joseph Banks in Botany Bay in 1770. This hardy shrub or sometimes small tree grows along the NSW south coast, from Jervis Bay to Sydney, and in the Blue Mountains between Moss Vale and Rylstone. A closely related subspecies, *B. ericifolia* subspecies *macrantha*, can be found growing along the north coast from Forster to the Queensland border <sup>1</sup>.

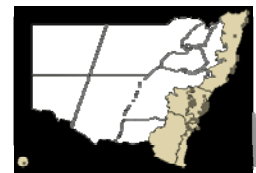


This was one of the first *Banksia* species grown in cultivation and, in 1804, was featured in *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* [published by Kew Gardens in London] where it was described as a “handsome shrub [that] thrives freely”<sup>2</sup>. At Macquarie, you can find it growing on sandy soil near sandstone outcrops in bushland on the northern side of the M2 Motorway. *Banksia* ‘Giant Candles’, a hybrid between *Banksia ericifolia* and *Banksia spinulosa* var. *cunninghamii*, has been planted on the northern side of Macquarie Engineering and Technical Services Buildings on the north-eastern side of campus. The Heath-leaved Banksia flowers in autumn through winter and thus is an important source of nectar for birds, insects and mammals at a time when resources can be considerably limited. Fire is important for regeneration. Plants are killed by fire and depend for their survival on an accumulation of seed that is released from woody capsules after fire.

<sup>1</sup> Plantnet <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au>

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banksia\\_ericifolia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banksia_ericifolia)

Map: Modified from Plantnet, <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au>



Text and photographs: Alison & Kevin Downing 14.08.2011,  
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