

Plant of the Week

Banksia integrifolia subspecies *integrifolia*

The Coast Banksia



If you land anywhere along the Australian coast, from Proserpine in far north Queensland to Geelong in Victoria, you are likely to find the **Coast Banksia**, *Banksia integrifolia*. The **Coast Banksia** grows on coastal dunes, headlands and along tidal inlets and is one of the four *Banksia* species collected in Botany Bay in 1770 by Joseph Banks. (The others were *Banksias serrata*, *Banksia ericifolia* and *Banksia robur*). There are early records of *Banksia integrifolia* from Bass Strait Islands but it has now been declared extinct in Tasmania. Botanist and *Banksia* expert Alex George wrote "*it spans a wider geographical and climatic range than any other species (of Banksia)*"¹

Banksia “flowers” are actually **involucres**, complex arrangements of hundreds of small, individual flowers, spirally arranged along a longitudinal axis. Detach one individual flower, and you will find that it has only one **floral whorl**, or **perianth**, consisting of four coloured

petal-like segments, often referred to as **tepals**, together with a central **style** and a stigma, referred to as a **pollen presenter**.

¹ George, Alex S. (1981). "The Genus *Banksia* L.f. (Proteaceae)". *Nuytsia* **3** (3): 239–473.



Flower diagram: modified from Australian Native Plants Society (Australia), <http://anpsa.org.au/banksia1.html>

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