

Plant of the Week

Banksia marginata

The Silver Banksia



Banksia marginata is widely distributed in heaths, woodlands and forests throughout south-eastern Australia, from northern New South Wales, to Victoria, Tasmania (including the Bass Strait Islands) and coastal regions of South Australia¹. The name '**Silver Banksia**' refers to the silvery-white undersurface of the leaves. In Sydney *B. marginata* has long been a favourite, both in its natural environment and in suburban gardens where it grows to about 1 – 1.5 metres. However, huge trees, from 15 – 30 metres high, have been reported from Victoria and Tasmania². *B. marginata* does well on rocky sandstone ridges but also grows on a surprisingly wide range of other substrates. The soft, yellow flowers (inflorescences) perch in leaf axils rather like small, woolly teddy bears. Unlike its sturdier relations (*B. serrata* and *B. oblongifolia*), in Sydney *B. marginata* does not survive bushfires and relies instead on post-fire release and germination of seed stored in and protected by, woody follicles. Increased fire frequency may threaten local populations.

¹ Australian National Botanic Gardens,
Australian Plant Name Index: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/cgi-bin/apni>

²Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banksia_marginata

Map modified from Australian Native Plants Society
(Australia), <http://anpsa.org.au/b-mar.html>



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