

## Plant of the Week

# *Banksia robur*

## The Swamp Banksia



*Banksia robur*, the **Swamp Banksia**, was the fourth *Banksia* species collected by **Joseph Banks** in Botany Bay in **1770**. We tend to think that Banksias need well-drained sandy soils but this is the exception. It is a tough, woody shrub with large leathery leaves and usually grows in permanently wet sites in swamps and heath lands along the east coast of Australia. Apart from an isolated population near Cooktown in far N Queensland, *B. robur* can be found from Gladstone in Queensland to Wollongong in New South Wales. In recent times, it has been used as an under stock for less hardy species of *Banksia*. Like most other Banksias, it is an important nectar source for insects, birds and mammals.

The other three *Banksia* species (*B. serrata*, *B. integrifolia*, *B. ericifolia*) that were collected by Banks in Botany Bay were described by Carolus Linnaeus the Younger in 1782 but it was not until 1800 that *Banksia robur* was described by Antonio José Cavanilles from a specimen collected in 1793 by Luis Née, a Franco-Spanish botanist who accompanied Alessandro Malaspina on the scientific expedition to the Pacific, including Australia, Tonga and New Zealand<sup>2</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> Australian Native Plants Society (Australia)

<http://anpsa.org.au/b-rob.html>

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

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

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