

## Plant of the Month - August

by Allan Carr

### *Hakea actites*

**Pronunciation:** HAY-kee-a ak-TITE-eez

**Derivation:** *Hakea*, honours Baron Christian Ludwig von Hake, German councillor and patron of botany; *actites*, from the Greek, *aktites* – coast dweller (a reference to coastal regions where this species is found).

**Wallum Hakea**  
PROTEACEAE



Leaves, flowers



Habit

*Hakea* is an endemic Australian genus of about 150 species of which only about 130 have been named. The richest region for them is south-west WA, a large number occur in central Australia and about 40 species are found in the eastern states. They are generally small to medium shrubs.

**Description:** *H. actites* is a prickly shrub to about 3 m, in wet heath and common in the wallum country on the east coast in south-east Qld from Hervey Bay to Woolgoolga in northern NSW. It was previously known as *H. gibbosa* until being named as a separate species in 1996. It often forms thickets which can be dense and difficult to penetrate and has a \*lignotuber from which it will sprout again after fire. A good refuge plant for small birds which also frequently use it for nesting.

**Leaves** to 120 mm are alternate, sharply pointed, \*terete and \*glabrous. Young foliage is quite soft and silky but becomes rigid and needle-like as it matures.

**Flowers** in small clusters of 1 to 6 in the leaf \*axils are white often with a pink style and pollen presenter. From June to September spectacular mass flowerings can occur in some locations.

**Fruits** to 35 mm are egg-shaped and woody with a bumpy surface. These split to reveal a tan coloured interior with two seeds. The seeds are not shed until stimulated to do so by environmental conditions such as a bushfire.

\*lignotuber = a conspicuous swelling, bearing dormant buds, at the base of the stem or below the soil, used as a survival mechanism

\*terete = circular in cross-section

\*glabrous = without hairs or scales

\*axil = angle formed between leaf and stem



Fruits