

# *Xanthorrhoea arenaria*



*Xanthorrhoea arenaria*.  
Photographs: G. Jordan.

**FAMILY:** XANTHORRHOAEACEAE

**BOTANICAL NAME:** *Xanthorrhoea arenaria*,  
Bedford, Fl. Australia 46: 225 (1986)

**COMMON NAME:** Sand grass tree

**COMMONWEALTH STATUS:** (*EPBC Act*)  
Vulnerable

**TASMANIAN STATUS:** (*TSP Act*) vulnerable

## Description

This species of grass tree does not have a trunk, rather the stem and root (caudex) is branched below the ground. Tufts called crowns arise directly from the ground. **Leaves:** The leaves are sometimes slightly greyish or bluish-green, between 40-80 cm long, 2-3 mm wide and 1-2.5 mm thick. The scape (naked stem below flower spike) is between 20-60 cm long and 8-11 mm in diameter. **Flowers:** The flowers are arranged in a spike that is greater than 1/3 but less than 1/2 the length of the flower stem. The flowering time for this species is between June and January. **Fruit:** The fruit is a capsule and the seeds are round or oval and slightly flattened. **Confusing species:** The morphology of the *Xanthorrhoea* species is confusing with some plants exhibiting intermediate or combined characters of *Xanthorrhoea australis*, *Xanthorrhoea bracteata* and *Xanthorrhoea arenaria*. As a result identification to a species level may be difficult until these taxonomic issues are resolved (description from Barker & Johnson 1998, Curtis & Morris 1994, Flora of Australia 1986). **Taxonomic history:** Together, *Xanthorrhoea bracteata* and *Xanthorrhoea arenaria* were previously known as *Xanthorrhoea minor* (*sensu* Rodway 1903).

## Distribution and Habitat

*Xanthorrhoea arenaria* is endemic to Tasmania and is found in coastal sandy heath from Bridport in the north-east to Coles Bay on the East Coast (Barker & Johnson 1998).



### **Key Sites and Populations**

Key sites include Waterhouse Reserve (near One Tree Hill), Pipers River, Bridport, Granite Point, St. Helens, Boat Harbour, Cray Creek and Coles Bay.

### **Known Reserves**

Reserved in the Freycinet National Park, Humbug Point Nature Recreation Area, Mount William National Park and the Waterhouse Conservation Area.

### **Ecology and Management**

This species can recruit from underground rhizomes after fire and other gap-forming disturbance. Fire at inappropriate intervals is detrimental. All the *Xanthorrhoea* species are highly threatened by root rot (*Phytophthora cinnamomi*) (TPLUC 1996).

Bees are the most likely pollination vector for this species (A. Hingston pers. comm.).

### **Conservation Status Assessment**

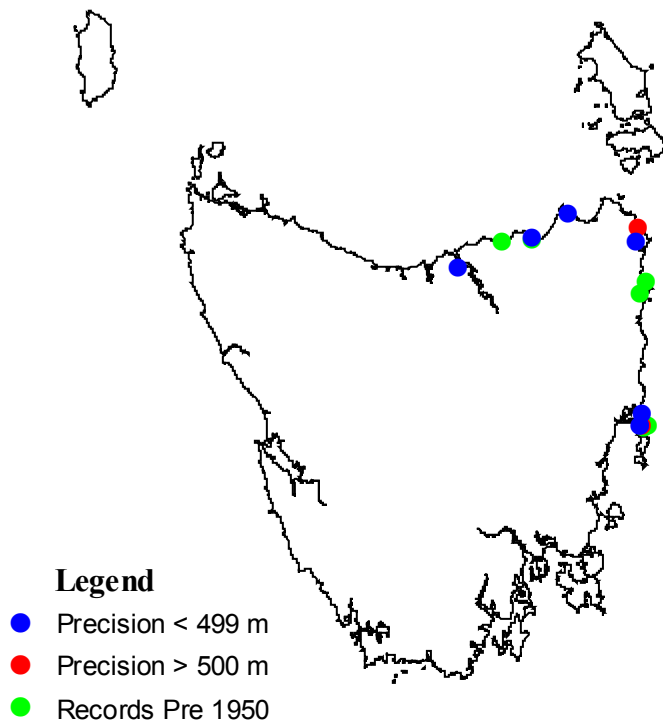
There is no immediate need for reassessment of *Xanthorrhoea arenaria*.

### **Further Information**

- Barker, PCJ 1994, *Phytophthora cinnamomi: The Susceptibility and Management of Selected Tasmanian Rare Species*, Forestry Tasmania & Australian Nature Conservation Agency, Hobart.
- Barker, PCJ & Johnson, KA 1998, *Recovery Plan – Selected Tasmanian Forest Associated Plants*, Forestry Tasmania, Hobart.
- Curtis, WM & Morris, DI 1994, *The Student's Flora of Tasmania*, Part 4B, Printing Authority of Tasmania, Hobart.
- Flora of Australia 1986, *Volume 46: Iridaceae to Dioscoreaceae*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- Tasmanian Public Land Use Commission 1996, *Environment & Heritage Report Vol IV, Background Report*, Part C, Tasmanian Commonwealth Regional Forest Agreement, Hobart.

## Tasmanian Distribution

(As per Threatened Species Unit records, June 2003)



### 1:25 000 Map Sheets

Ansons Bay, Bell Bay, Binalong, Bridport, Coles Bay, Eddystone, Friendly, St Helens, Waterhouse, Weymouth.

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