

# Indigenous Plants for Ballarat Gardens



## Bushy Needlewood

### *Hakea decurrens*

#### FAST FACTS

##### Shrub

Family:	Proteaceae
	Protea
Size:	2m H x 1m W
Position:	Sunny
Soil:	Well drained
Flowers:	Winter – Spring
Fruits:	Woody pods
Care:	Low maintenance

**Bushy Needlewood** (*Hakea decurrens*) is a native shrub from forests around Ballarat and is a favourite of local wildlife.

**Location:** Grows well in a sunny, well drained position but as its name suggests, has strong needle-like leaves so is best planted away from walkways towards the back of a garden. Use a row of them as a semi-transparent security screen.

**Leaves:** The stiff cylindrical leaves have a strong, pointed tip and can easily penetrate skin. Despite, or perhaps because of this, small birds love sheltering amongst them.

**Flowers:** Gorgeous grevillea-like, white, honey-scented flowers create a beautiful display and provide nectar for visiting native butterflies.

**Fruit:** Hard, woody, beaked pods contain large seeds which will attract parrots and

majestic Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos to your garden. Un-opened fruits remain on the plants for many months, providing an important food source over winter.

**Planting:** Plant in a hole not much larger than the pot within a few days of purchase and water immediately with a full bucket.

**Care:** Cockatoos and parrots tend to tip-prune, but if not wear gloves to protect your hands when pruning and remove needles to a safe place.

**Propagation:** Although it's best to leave most of the seed for birds, a few dry unopened fruits can be cut from the plant after a few years. Leave the fruit in a warm, dry spot until they split and release the large paper-winged seeds. Place seed on the surface of a pot, sprinkle lightly with soil, keep it moist and watch them grow!