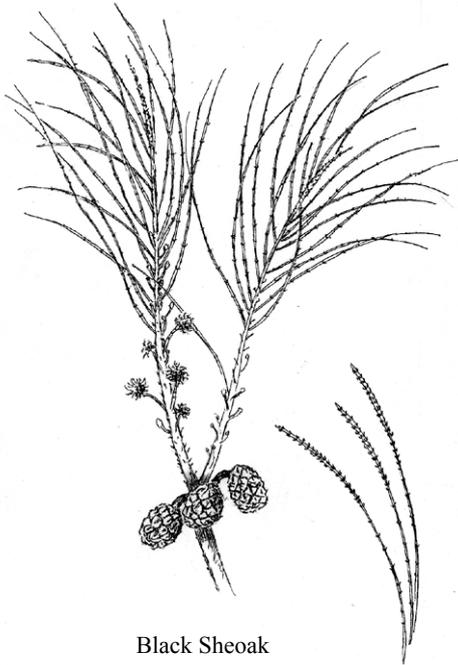


ALLOCASUARINAS (SHEOAKS) IN OUR DISTRICT – DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

The leaves are a notable feature of the *Allocasuarina* genus, and as in all sheoaks, are reduced to rings of scales. Although their leaves resemble pine needles, sheoaks are flowering plants. The three species described here are generally dioecious (i.e. the male and female flowers are borne on separate plants). The flowers are wind-pollinated, and the pollen may be carried by the wind for many kilometres.

Black Sheoak *Allocasuarina littoralis*

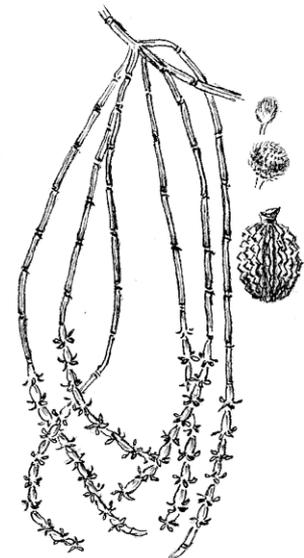
The Black Sheoak is an erect, dark green tree to about 8 metres high, growing in woodlands. The bark is dark and closely fissured. In winter and spring, the male tree bears spikes of rusty-brown flowers at the end of upright branchlets. The female tree has rose-coloured flowers in small globular heads, close to the branches. After fertilisation, and as the female flowers wither, woody, cylindrical cones with a flattened end, and varying in size from 1–3 cm, develop.



Black Sheoak

Drooping Sheoak *Allocasuarina verticillata*

Found in exposed situations along the coast, this large shrub or tree to about 5 metres high is dull-greish-green. The crown is usually rounded, and as its common name suggests, it has a drooping habit. In winter and spring, the male tree is very attractive with masses of tiny, tan-coloured flowers that hang down like strings of beads from the ends of the branchlets, bestowing a graceful appearance and an overall bronze hue in bright sunlight. Orange-red flowers of the female appear in small globular heads on short stalks, close to the branches, and are followed by large barrel-shaped cones (up to 5 cm long) with sharp valves.



Drooping Sheoak

Small Sheoak *Allocasuarina misera*

The Small Sheoak is a common shrub in the coastal heathlands of the district. It grows to about 90 cm high, but is often stunted by the wind in exposed situations. The scale-like leaves are dark green. In winter and spring, the male plants bear tan flowers in spikes on the ends of slender branchlets. Stalkless, globular heads of deep reddish-purple flowers form on the female plants, and small cylindrical cones develop after the flowers die.



Small Sheoak

*Ros Gibson
Drawings by Ruth Hurst*

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