


Grevillea banksii

<i>Grevillea banksii</i>	
	
Scientific classification	
Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Eudicots
Order:	Proteales
Family:	Proteaceae
Genus:	<i>Grevillea</i>
Species:	<i>G. banksii</i>
Binomial name	
<i>Grevillea banksii</i> R.Br.	

Grevillea banksii, known by various common names including **Red silky oak**, **Dwarf silky oak**, **Banks' grevillea**, **Byfield waratah** and, in Hawaii, **Kahili flower** or **Kahili tree** is a plant of the large genus *Grevillea* in the diverse family Proteaceae. Native to Queensland, it has been a popular garden plant for many years though has been superseded somewhat horticulturally by smaller and more floriferous hybrids. A white-flowered form *G. banksii* fo. *albiflora* is known as **white silky oak**.

Taxonomy

Grevillea banksii was first described by the botanist Robert Brown, who gave it its epithet in honour of Sir Joseph Banks.

Description

It is a tall, slender or spreading shrub, or small tree up to 7 m (23 ft) high. Its leaves are pinnate with 3-11 deeply divided, linear to lanceolate segments 5-10 cm (2-4 in) long and 1 cm wide, with curled-back margins. Flowers are bright red or creamy-white, in clusters up to 15 cm (6 in) long. It flowers for most of the year, but mainly in winter and spring.

Distribution and habitat

Grevillea banksii is found on the Queensland coast from Ipswich to Byfield National Park. It grows on headlands, ridges and forest.

Cultivation



seed pods of *Grevillea banksii*

Various forms of *Grevillea banksii* have been in cultivation for many decades, however it is less seen now than previously as it has been replaced by smaller, more compact, hybrids such as *G.* 'Robyn Gordon' and *G.* 'Superb'. These newer plants are more compact and have longer flowering periods and are more in demand in the era of the shrinking garden.

Grevillea 'Ruby red' is a prostrate red flowering form of uncertain origin which is in cultivation, often grafted onto *Grevillea robusta*.

However, it has left a rich horticultural legacy, being one of the parents of *G.* 'Robyn Gordon', which has been one of the most commercially successful garden plants in Australian horticultural

history. It is also parent of other garden plants *Grevillea* 'Honey Gem', *G.* 'Superb', *G.* 'Misty Pink', *G.* 'Pink Surprise', and possibly *G.* 'Moonlight'.

Toxicity and allergic reactions

The flowers and seed pods contain toxic hydrogen cyanide.^[1] The alkyl resorcinols in *G.banksii* and *Grevillea* 'Robyn Gordon' are responsible for contact dermatitis.^[2]

References

[1] Everist, S.L., *Poisonous Plants of Australia*, Angus & Robertson, 1974.

[2] Menz, J., Rossi, R., Taylor, W.C, Wall, L., Contact dermatitis from *Grevillea*'Robyn Gordon', *Contact Dermatitis*, Vol. 15, Iss. 3, pp 126-131, Apr 2006

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Article Sources and Contributors

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