



FLORA FACTS

Metalasia muricata

ENGLISH:- white bristle bush

AFRIKAANS:- blombos, witsteekbossie

SA TREE No. 736

DESCRIPTION - Erect, woody shrub up to 2.5m, the leaves are often curved backwards, twisted and hooked at the tips. The margins are rolled under. The honey scented flower heads are without rays, several in terminal clusters, the bracts are brown in colour. Bark of the branchlets are white-felted to pale grey.

HABITAT & ECOLOGY - Pollinated by insects, also said to be wind-pollinated. Hairy pappus assist wind dispersal. It grows in sandy soil from Yzerfontein in the West to the Eastern Cape. Altitude less than 300m above sea level. In the winter the entire shrub is covered in compact white flower heads on the top of long straight stems.



USES - Excellent plant for dune stabilization, it is also browsed by stock in times of food shortage, and the dried leaves are reputed to make a good tea.

HISTORICAL - The name Metalasia is derived from the Greek Meta which is interpreted as backwards and lasios, referring to the woolly undersides of the leaves; muricata is derived from murex, meaning roughened and with hard points like the shell of a mollusc.