



Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula Inc

ABN 17 536 241 485

PO Box 244 Venus Bay Vic 3956

Website: www.friendsofvenusbaypeninsula.org.au

Email: friendsofvbp@gmail.com

Plant of the month: Dune Thistle *Actites megalocarpus*



Dune Thistle *Actites megalocarpus* is a perennial native thistle with milky sap, growing to 60 cm high and with a rhizomatous root system. The variable leaves are stiff, fleshy and glossy, with the lower leaves 5-10 cm long and 1.5-3.5 cm wide and the upper leaves 10-20 cm long by 1.5-6 cm wide with prickly teeth or lobes. The yellow daisy flowerheads have a row of spiny bracts (a leaf-like structure) below them. Flowering time is September to June. Dune Thistle is found along the coast from Perth to Bundaberg, including Tasmania. It is quite common here at Venus Bay, along the frontal dunes and in the sandy soil, providing a colourful splash.

Dune Thistle grows in a more stunted form in the exposed conditions along the coast, where it is tolerant of salt spray and sand-blasting winds. Slightly further inland it often grows under the shelter of taller vegetation, there it can reach a greater height. Because it resembles other thistles it can be subject to inadvertent weeding but it is an important local species that should be retained and protected.

Dune Thistle belongs in the Asteraceae or daisy family. The genus *Actites* is endemic to Australia and contains only one species *Actites megalocarpus*. The species name *megalocarpus* comes from the Greek 'megal' for very large and describes the carpel or female parts of the flower. For further information please visit FVBP website above. Photo: Lorraine Norden.

