

## IN BRIEF

### JUST BECAUSE IT IS PRICKLY DOESN'T MEAN IT IS A WEED!



Last spring, this photo was sent in by Colleen Grugeon, who noticed the plant under banksias in the Scott River area. She assumed it was a weed and wanted to know how to get rid of it.

This is blue devils, *Eryngium pinnatifidum*, a member of the carrot family, Apiaceae. It occurs throughout the south-west on the coastal side of a line from Northampton to just east of Albany. It is an erect perennial growing, in good seasons, up to 30 cm high. The whole plant is slightly fleshy and grows from a narrow, carrot-like root. Both the leaves and the bracts surrounding the inflorescence are somewhat prickly and the entire thing smells of liquorice – a Mediterranean plant that is in the same family. It is believed that Nyoongar people did eat the soft base of the fleshy stem, but there are no definite records.

So, if you have this on your block, look after it and encourage it to spread. It is definitely not a weed!

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