

WHITE BRISTLE BUSH



Metalasia muricata

White Bristle Bush/Blombos

PLANT TYPE: SHRUB

SA DISTRIBUTION: EASTERN CAPE, KWAZULU-NATAL, WESTERN CAPE

SOIL TYPE: SANDY

FLOWERING SEASON: SPRING, WINTER

PH: ACID, NEUTRAL

FLOWER COLOUR: WHITE, PINK, CREAM

ASPECT: FULL SUN

Metalasia muricata is a dense, fine-leaved shrub endemic to the southern coastal regions of South Africa. It is commonly found in sandy soils, coastal dunes, and fynbos vegetation, where it plays an important role in **stabilising soil** and **supporting biodiversity**.

Although not as showy as some of its fynbos relatives, its soft, silvery appearance and mass flowering habit make it a valuable plant both ecologically and aesthetically.

BLOMBOS



Characteristics

White Bristle Bush is a fine-textured, densely branched evergreen shrub that brings a soft, misty quality to the fynbos landscape. From a distance, it often reads as a silvery-green mound, its appearance shaped by the narrow, needle-like leaves that cover its stems in tight clusters.

In winter, the plant becomes noticeably more expressive as it produces masses of small, **creamy-white flower heads**. These are not large or showy individually, but together they create a delicate haze across the shrub, giving it a luminous presence in the colder months. The flowers are an important seasonal resource, drawing in bees and other insects when few alternative nectar sources are available.

Naturally adapted to harsh coastal environments, it thrives in **sandy, nutrient-poor soils** and withstands wind, salt spray, and prolonged dry periods once established. Its growth habit is typically rounded and compact, though it can vary depending on exposure and site conditions.

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Why The Blombos?

Metalasia muricata is more than a background shrub in the fynbos — it is a stabilising and sustaining presence within the landscape.

Its dense growth helps **bind sandy soils**, making it especially valuable in coastal systems where erosion is a constant force.

Ecologically, it supports winter biodiversity at a time when floral resources are limited. By providing nectar and shelter, it helps maintain insect populations that in turn support birds and other wildlife higher up the food chain.

In designed landscapes, it offers quiet but essential structure. While it may not dominate visually, it brings texture, softness, and seasonal lightness to plantings that aim to reflect natural fynbos dynamics. Its resilience also makes it a practical choice for **low-input, water-wise gardens** that need to withstand coastal conditions without heavy maintenance.