

# Peppy Plants March 2012

by Eleanor Bennett

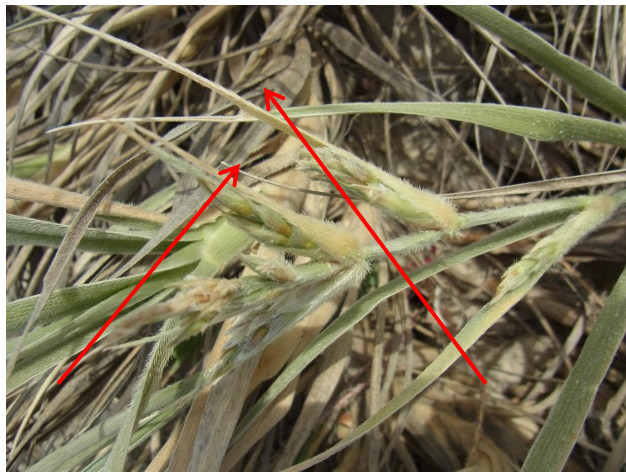
There are two different species of Spinifex along the Peppy shoreline. They are *Spinifex hirsutus* (see also [Spinifex hirsutus](#)) and *Spinifex longifolius* (see also [Spinifex longifolius](#)). Spinifex is derived from the Latin *spina* – meaning a spine or thorn and *facio* to make, which refers to the prickly leaves of the originally described species; *hirsutus* from the Latin meaning having long hairs and *longifolius* from the Latin *longus* meaning long and *folium* meaning leaf. Note the plants referred to as Spinifex in the interior of Australia are a different genus *Triodia* and are not true Spinifexes - no doubt given this common name due to their spiny leaves.

Both of the *Spinifex* species are common along the coastal areas at Peppy where they assist with sand stabilization. Look at the areas cut away by winter storms and you will see a dense network of fine roots, mostly from these plants. They have separate male and female plants with different sized flowering heads. They are wind pollinated by the pollen blowing from the male flowers onto the stigmas of the female flowers.

## *Spinifex hirsutus*



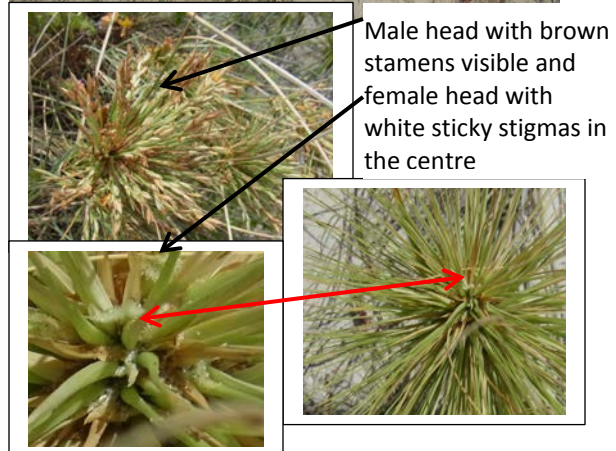
The photograph above show the grey green hairy, flat leaves of *Spinifex hirsutus* and that below a male flowering head, which is also very hairy.



Spike of flowers supported by a leaf-like bract.

## *Spinifex longifolius*

The leaves are prickly, without hairs and round in cross section.



Male head with brown stamens visible and female head with white sticky stigmas in the centre

It is common to see the detached female heads blowing along the sand. These are the fruiting heads which are dropping seeds.