

# NATURE in FOCUS

Bulletin No. 16

Presented by — “As It Is” Photography — Jenny Rose

## Macrozamia riedlei—Zamia Palm, Jeeriji



Jeeriji is a Cycad, ancient plant related to conifers, so not really a palm. In our local bush they can appear to be very “scrappy” (No.1) or very “tropical” (No.2). It occurs from just north of Perth, York/Beverley, to east of Albany. It is one of only three Macrozamia species in WA.

Jeeriji is very slow growing and reaches from 0.3-3m high and is usually trunkless. Some plants may form a small trunk after many years (No. 3). This is nothing like the trunk formed by *Macrozamia dyeri*, the Southwest Esperance Tree Cycad, which only occurs in the Esperance region (No.4—South Coast)!!!!!!



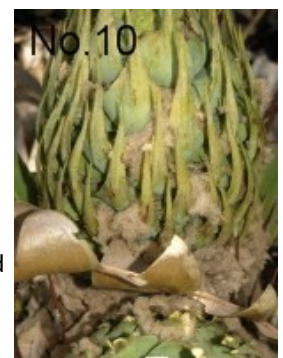
Jeeriji has both male and female plants. Male plants can produce up to seven cones that resemble a woven basket (No.5) and female plants have 1-2 cones that resemble pineapples (No.6).



Once again “pollination by deception” occurs. The female is pollinated by weevils that have feasted on the male cones. The males emit a scent that attracts the weevils. The female emits the same scent to attract the weevils to her, but when the female plant is pollinated, it emits a scent that repels the weevils.

The female cones break up to release large red-fleshed seeds, but the dried male cones stay on the plant. (No.7, No.8 & No.9). These seeds are poisonous to humans. However, the Aboriginals devised a lengthy treatment including burial, soaking in water and roasting, that removed the toxins, allowing the seeds to be eaten. The seeds are

eaten by emus that swallow the fruit whole, thereby dispersing the seeds.



The woolly flock around the seeds and fronds was used as fire tinder by the Aboriginals and traded to the colonists who used it for filling cushions and pillows. (No.10)