



City of
Mount Gambier

Useful Indigenous Plants of the South East

An introductory guide to identifying, growing and using native plants of South East South Australia.

Introduction

This publication is an introductory guide to useful indigenous plants of the South East of South Australia. In the context of this guide “useful plants” means plants which were used historically by local Aboriginal people for food or materials.

Indigenous plants can make great landscaping gardens, with the added benefits of being suited to the local climate and conditions, usually requiring less water and attention, and also providing other uses such as food or materials.

Special Thanks

A special thanks must be given to Mr Neville Bonney, who has compiled a great deal of information on native plants of the South East over many decades.

Neville’s books are a great source of information for people wanting to learn more about identifying, growing and eating the native plants of the South East.

His publications are highly recommended.

A list of Neville’s books on plants of the South East is contained at the end of this publication.



Above: Indigenous use garden at McDonald Park School, Mount Gambier.

Indigenous Plants of the South East



Acacia leiophylla

SE Aboriginal Name: Unknown

Common Name: Limestone Wattle

Form & Size: Tall shrub to 4m.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Grows mainly in sand or loamy sand.

Cultivation: Grow from seed. Pour very hot water over seeds, allow to cool. Strain. Sow seeds 3-5mm under soil. Keep moist until germination. Sow from spring.

Use & Harvesting: Ripening green pods were steamed and/or roasted. The dried seeds with the black coating were ground up to make a flour-like substance. Flowers July to September. Collect seeds in December to January. To harvest the seeds either remove dry pods with hands (wearing gloves), or lay a sheet or tarp under the shrub and shake branchlets to dislodge seeds and pods. Trample over pods. Sieve out clean seed.



Acacia longifolia var. sophorae

SE Aboriginal Name: Nal-a-wort, Kabla

Common Name: Coast wattle, Coastal wattle

Form & Size: Spreading tall shrub to 5m. Foliage resting on the ground. Trunk divided into several trunks. Flowers - yellow, rod-like to 4cm. Fruiting pods - long, narrow usually curved, containing black seeds.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: A fast growing and hardy plant tolerant of all soils provided they are not waterlogged. At their best in a sunny position. Will tolerate direct coastal exposure.

Cultivation: Grow from seed. Pour very hot water over seeds, allow to cool. Strain. Sow seeds 3-5mm under soil. Keep moist until germination. Sow from spring. NOTE: Contact DEWNR before attempting to grow or plant this species – although this Acacia is indigenous, it can become invasive in areas that are not part of its pre-European distribution.

Use & Harvesting: Ripening green pods were collected and cooked over a fire. The protein-rich seeds were then picked out and eaten. The dried seeds with the black coating were ground up to make a flour-like substance. Flowers July to September. Collect seeds in January to February. To harvest the seeds either remove dry pods with hands (wearing gloves), or lay a sheet or tarp under the shrub and shake branchlets to dislodge seeds and pods. Trample over pods. Sieve out clean seed.



Watch local Aboriginal elder Uncle Doug speak about Nal-a-wort, Kabla.

https://youtu.be/oHiDWTOQ_N4



Photo: Elspeth Swan

Photo: Bryan Haywood

Acacia mearnsii

SE Aboriginal Name: Currong

Common Name: Black wattle

Form & Size: Medium tree with bi-pinnate foliage. Flowers- yellow, globular, in dense groups.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Grows well on a variety of soils, including very dry and poor soils.

Cultivation: Grow from seed. Pour very hot water over seeds, allow to cool. Wash well to remove glue material before drying. Strain. Sow seeds 3-5mm under sandy soils or propagating mixes. Keep moist until germination. Sow in tubes in Autumn or direct in Spring.

Use & Harvesting: Gum was chewed, used for medicinal purposes and in tools. Fishing line could be made from the inner bark.



Photo: Bryan Haywood



Photo: Elspeth Swan

Acacia melanoxylon

SE Aboriginal Name: Unknown

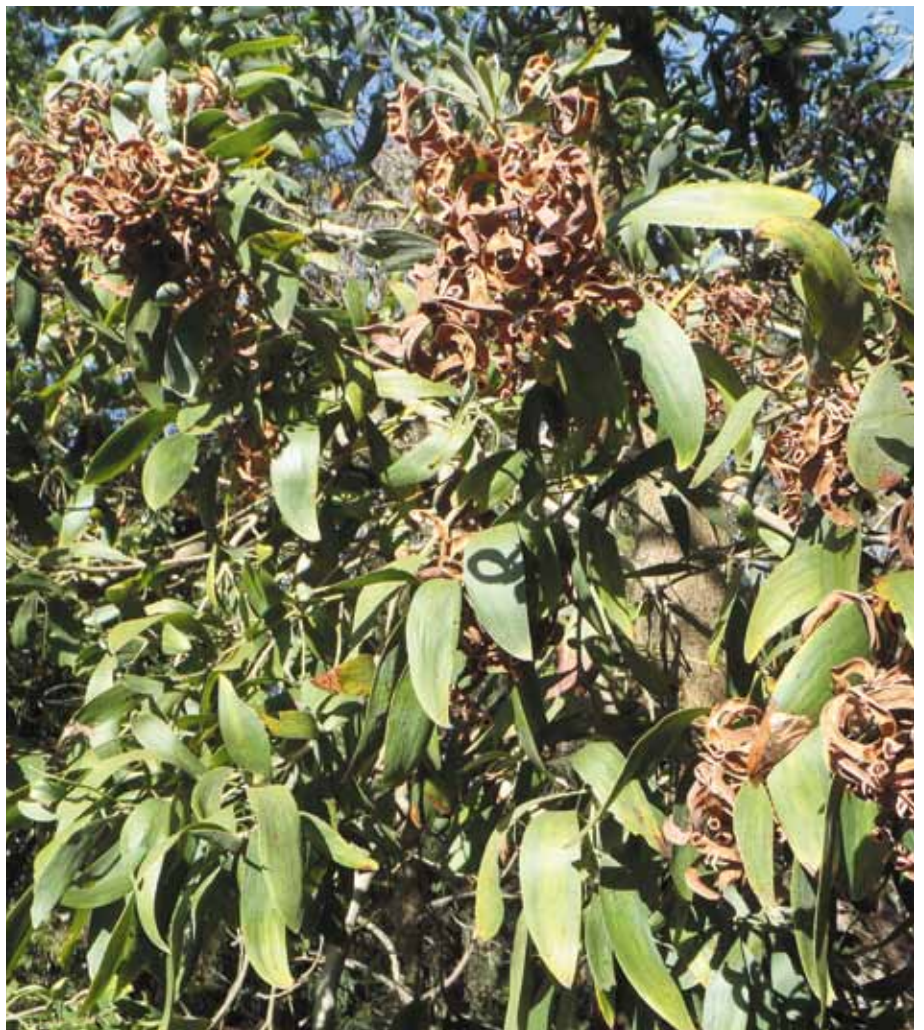
Common Name: Blackwood

Form & Size: Erect or spreading tree 6–30 m high; bark deeply fissured, dark grey-black; branchlets angled or flattened.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: It tolerates drought, poor drainage, any soil, salt air, gusty, steady or cold winds if grown in open, fog, smog, temperature extremes, sun, or shade.

Cultivation: Grow from seed. Pour very hot water over seeds, allow to cool. Can be left in water for two days to allow moisture to penetrate these hard seeds. Strain. Sow seeds 3-5mm under soil. Keep moist until germination. Sow from early Spring.

Use & Harvesting: Seeds can be eaten ground. Pods mature summer–autumn with a mid-February peak. Gum can be eaten. Bark and twigs used by Aboriginal people to stupefy fish – though not in the South East. Flowers August to October. Collect seeds in January to March. To harvest the seeds either remove dry pods with hands (wearing gloves), or lay a sheet or tarp under the tree and shake or knock branches to dislodge seeds and pods. Trample over pods. Sieve out clean seed.



Acacia pycnantha

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|---------------------------------|---|
| SE Aboriginal Name: | Unknown |
| Common Name: | Golden wattle |
| Form & Size: | Shrub to small tree to 5m, with glabrous branches. |
| Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: | It grows on a range of sites, and on variety soils including calcareous sands, clays and shallow, stony loams. |
| Cultivation: | Grow from seed. Pour very hot water over seeds, allow to cool. Can be left overnight. Strain. Sow seeds 3-5mm under sandy soil or general propagating mixes. Keep moist until germination. Sow from early Spring. |
| Use & Harvesting: | Flowers collected and soaked in water for nectar. Gum heated to a viscous syrup and used for food or dissolved in water for drinking. |



Allocasuarina leuhmannii

SE Aboriginal Name: Unknown

Common Name: Buloke

Form & Size: Tree growing to 7-15m. Long weeping branchlets, grey-green. Interesting cone-like fruit. Grows in Mid to Upper South East.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Grows in a range of soil types, mainly sandy loams.

Cultivation: Grow from seed. Spread seed over propagating or sandy mix, cover with a layer of fine gravel and keep moist. Sow late winter to spring. Ideal temperature for germination is 18-25oC.

Use & Harvesting: New seed pods were chewed.



Photo: DEWNR




Photo: David Hinchliffe



Photo: David Hinchliffe

Allocasuarina verticillata

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| SE Aboriginal Name: | Kotgee |
| Common Name: | Drooping sheoak |
| Form & Size: | Tree growing to 5-8m. Long weeping branchlets, grey-green. Interesting cone-like fruit. |
| Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: | Favoured condition - Dry. Soils include skeletal types derived from sandstone or granite, sandy coastal soils, including some derived from limestone, and heavier textured clay loams. |
| Cultivation: | Grow from seed. Spread seed over propagating or sandy mix, cover with a layer of fine gravel and keep moist. Sow late winter to spring. Ideal temperature for germination is 18-25°C. |
| Use & Harvesting: | Young stems and cones can be chewed to stave off thirst and hunger. |
|  | Watch local Aboriginal elder Uncle Doug speak about Kotgee. https://youtu.be/kiUvFEIBH0 |



Amyema pendula

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|---------------------------------|--|
| SE Aboriginal Name: | Unknown |
| Common Name: | Drooping Mistletoe |
| Form & Size: | Parasitic plant. |
| Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: | Predominantly parasitic on species of Eucalyptus, sometimes on species of Acacia. |
| Cultivation: | Unknown |
| Use & Harvesting: | Fruits eaten. |
| Note: | The fruit of the similar species – <i>Lysiana exocarpi</i> (Harlequin Mistletoe) – was also eaten. |



Apium prostratum

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|---------------------------------|--|
| SE Aboriginal Name: | Unknown |
| Common Name: | Sea Parsley (Sea Celery) |
| Form & Size: | Prostrate groundcover, spreading to 0.5 m wide. |
| Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: | Naturally prefers shaded and damp locations, but can be grown in containers using a well drained potting mix, in full sun or partial shade. Moderate salinity tolerance. |
| Cultivation: | Grow from seed in spring, or from cuttings. |
| Use & Harvesting: | Leaves and stems can be eaten, tastes similar to European parsley and celery. Can be used in much the same way as European parsley. |



Arthropodium strictum

SE Aboriginal Name: Unknown

Common Name: Chocolate lily, Common vanilla-lily, Vanilla lily

Form & Size: Small annuals up to 30cm in height, with distinctive purple flower petals in spring.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Favoured condition - Dry. Widespread in open woodlands and grasslands. Full sun to semi-shade.

Cultivation: Cultivate either by tuber division in late summer or grow from seed. Spread seed over propagating or sandy mix, cover with a layer of fine gravel and keep moist. Sow from March to early winter.

Use & Harvesting: Before plant withered away, about three months after the flowers dry off, tubers were dug up and eaten - can be eaten raw but were usually roasted.



Photo: Oisín Sweeney

Atriplex cinerea

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| SE Aboriginal Name: | Unknown |
| Common Name: | Coast Saltbush |
| Form & Size: | Shrub up to 1m, silver-grey appearance. |
| Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: | Naturally occurs in coastal marshes. Has high salt tolerance. Moderate waterlogging tolerance. |
| Cultivation: | Rinse fruit to remove salt, or remove seed from fruit. Sow seed in autumn, early winter or spring. Lightly cover with soil and keep moist. |
| Use & Harvesting: | Leaves used as salad green, can be blanched. Salty. |



Banksia marginata

SE Aboriginal Name: Unknown

Common Name: Silver banksia, Honeysuckle

Form & Size: Medium shrub to small tree to 2m. Leaves - dark olive green, with whitish underside. Flowers - cylindrical cream-yellow up to 10cm.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: The plant favours a position in full sun or dappled shade. Generally hardy but does not like waterlogged soil. Does not tolerate direct coastal exposure.

Cultivation: Cultivate by sowing seed with a light cover of soil in winter to spring. Should germinate in 4-6 weeks.

Use & Harvesting: Flower spikes were broken off and soaked in water to make a sweet drink. Gum from Golden wattle and Black wattle was sometimes added.



Watch local Aboriginal elder Uncle Doug speak about Silver Banksia.

<https://youtu.be/tfBMpKsJ6aw>



Photo: Elspeth Swan



Photo: Elspeth Swan

Billardiera cymosa

SE Aboriginal Name: Kunduwi

Common Name: Sweet apple-berry

Form & Size: Light climber with wiry branches, often found growing through other plants. Leaves - glabrous, narrow to oblong, about 2-3cm. Flower-heads - tubular, small with flared tips, cream through to a bluish white, sometimes purple, in clusters near end of branches. Fruit - oblong to 3cm, fleshy, often reddish.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Full sun to semi shade. Suitable for: light (sandy) and medium (loamy) soils and prefers well-drained soil. Suitable pH: acid and neutral soils. It prefers moist soil.

Cultivation: Lightly cover seed with potting mix or bush sand in mid-winter to spring. Place in warm sunny position. Can take up to 8 weeks to germinate. Seeds may need to be washed with detergent to become clean.

Use & Harvesting: When fruit changes from green to a maroon colour berries can be eaten. Aniseed flavour.



Photo: Elspeth Swan



Photo: Elspeth Swan

Bulbine bulbosa

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| SE Aboriginal Name: | Unknown |
| Common Name: | Bulbine Lily |
| Form & Size: | Densely tufted perennial herb reaching 75cm. |
| Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: | Often associated with water retentive soils or soils which are seasonally inundated, such as near swamps. |
| Cultivation: | Lightly cover seeds with propagating mix or bush sand from autumn to early winter. Keep moist and in an open position. |
| Use & Harvesting: | The plump, round corms (tubers), can be eaten all year round, although it will take a few years initially for the corm to mature. Best roasted. |



Burchardia umbellata

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| SE Aboriginal Name: | Popoto |
| Common Name: | Milkmaids |
| Form & Size: | Small annual flower, can grow to 30cm. Groups of small white flowers on the summit of a flowering stalk. |
| Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: | Occurs naturally on moist, well-drained soils in open forests, woodlands, grasslands, heathland and in damp areas including swamps |
| Cultivation: | Lightly cover seeds with propagating mix or bush sand from autumn to early winter. Keep moist and in an open position. |
| Use & Harvesting: | Tubers can be eaten, usually after the flowers have died off. Generally cooked before eating, but can be eaten raw. Other small lilies that were used in a similar way include Early Nancy (<i>Wurmbea dioica</i>), Fringe lilies (<i>Thysanotus</i> species), Bluegrass lilies (<i>Caesia</i> species), and Bulbine lily (<i>Bulbine bulbosa</i>). |



Photo: Elspeth Swan



Photo: Elspeth Swan

Carpobrotus rossii

SE Aboriginal Name: Keeng-a

Common Name: Pig face

Form & Size: Robust prostrate ground cover spreading to several metres. Leaves - fleshy. Flowers - pink. Fruit - round, fleshy with jelly like centre.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Well drained soil and full to partial sun. Drought tolerant.

Cultivation: Can be grown from seed but easier to grow vegetatively. Put a piece of the plant and heel the broken end into warm and moist soil.

Use & Harvesting: When fruit ripens to a pinkish / red colour they can be eaten raw or dried. Fruit ripens in autumn. The salty leaves were sometimes eaten raw or cooked and the older plants were used as a medicine to treat cuts and bites.



Watch local Aboriginal elder Uncle Doug speak about Keeng-a.
<https://youtu.be/x8hdj1J3xPs>



Photo: DEWNR



Photo: DEWNR

Convolvulus remotus

SE Aboriginal Name: Tarook

Common Name: Australian bindweed

Form & Size: Scrambling type herb. Flowers - pale pink.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Found on a variety of soils from clays to sand dunes, mostly in chenopod shrublands or Acacia open shrublands or woodlands.

Cultivation: Cover seeds with 3-4mm propagating mix and a light layer of gravel. Keep moist and in an open position. Sow from early spring.

Use & Harvesting: Roots were dug up and cooked before eating.



Photo: Elspeth Swan

Photo: Elspeth Swan

Dianella revoluta var. revoluta

SE Aboriginal Name: Peeintuck

Common Name: Black anther flax-lily, Spreading flax lily

Form & Size: Extremely hardy plant, can be in small clumps, up to 5m across. Flax lilies have strap-like leaves arising from the base and contain many attractive blue star-like flowers during spring and early summer. Colourful purplish-blue fleshy fruits appear during January and February.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Very hardy with a wide moisture, temperature and soil range.

Cultivation: Lightly cover seed with fine gravel, keep moist in an open warm position. sow late summer through to spring. Direct sow in high rainfall areas in mid to late winter.

Use & Harvesting: Juices from berries were used to combat colds. Rhizomatous lateral roots were scraped clean, chewed and eaten and were helpful for colds and people not feeling well. Leaves were split and twisted and used for making ties. Reported to be very strong.



Watch local Aboriginal elder Uncle Doug speak about Peeintuck
<https://youtu.be/pz1aBt7eMEI>



Dodonaea viscosa

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|---------------------------------|--|
| SE Aboriginal Name: | Unknown |
| Common Name: | Sticky hop bush |
| Form & Size: | Erect shrub to 3m, bright green sticky leaves. Green flowers in winter turn to striking red seed pods in spring. |
| Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: | In general, extremely hardy species and able to re-sprout from the base. Used successfully as a hedge due to the dense habit. Does not tolerate direct coastal exposure. |
| Cultivation: | Lightly cover seeds with propagating mix in late winter to spring, keep moist. Dunking seeds in very hot water for 30 seconds and then rapidly cooling them may help shorten germination time. |
| Use & Harvesting: | Hop-like fruits were used by colonists as a substitute for true hops in making beer. |



Enchylaena tomentosa var. tomentosa

SE Aboriginal Name: Paranghuni

Common Name: Ruby Saltbush

Form & Size: Small shrub to 1m, covered in dense woolly hairs.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Grows in a wide range of soil types. Most often found in well drained sandy soils. Resistant to drought and frost.

Cultivation: Sow seed winter to spring. Lightly cover with sand, keep moist. Very small amount of salt mixed with the sand may assist germination.

Use & Harvesting: Fruit is edible, salty-sweet.



Exocarpos cupressiformis

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| SE Aboriginal Name: | Unknown |
| Common Name: | Native cherry, Cherry Ballart |
| Form & Size: | Tall shrub to small tree to 8, cypress-like foliage. Flowers - very small green. Fruit - fleshy, ripening to a red colour. |
| Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: | Widespread in a variety of habitats and soils. Frost tolerant. Full sun, semi-shade. Root parasite, usually growing near Eucalypts. |
| Cultivation: | Cover seeds with 5mm of sandy or loamy bush soil from early winter. Keep in an open warm position. Plant out within 12 months in an area where potential hosts occur, such as Eucalyptus, Myrtaceae, Proteaceae, Leguminosae or Casuarinaceae species. |
| Use & Harvesting: | Fruit is edible, generally sparse on the tree but enjoyable snack when ripe. Fruit a reddish colour when ripe. Burnt leaves repel insects. |
| Note: | The fruit of the similar species - <i>Exocarpos syrticola</i> (Coast Ballart / Panpandii) – was also eaten. Leaves were also burnt to repel insects. |

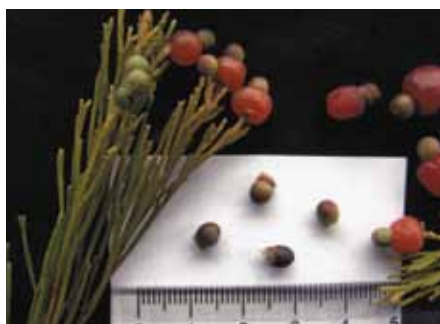


Photo: Elspeth Swan

Photo: Elspeth Swan

Geranium retrorsum

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|---------------------------------|---|
| SE Aboriginal Name: | Unknown |
| Common Name: | Grassland geranium |
| Form & Size: | Prostrate or scrambling perennial herb with stems to 50 cm long, softly hairy. |
| Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: | Summer dry, winter moist soils which are never inundated for long, in lowland grasslands and grassy woodland. Semi shade to partial shade. Plant under established trees in a shady position. |
| Cultivation: | Cultivate vegetatively. |
| Use & Harvesting: | Geranium species - roots were eaten. |



Kunzea pomifera

SE Aboriginal Name: Ngurp, Muntharr

Common Name: Muntries

Form & Size: Ground cover, occasionally semi-prostrate. Can be grown on trellis. Radial branches spreading up to 3 metres in all directions. Leaves - small, oval, round. Flowers - white with prominent stamens. Fruit - globular green, ripening to a reddish, purple in colour.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Favoured condition - Limestone sands. Free draining soil in sheltered conditions.

Cultivation: Propagate vegetatively. To grow from seed lightly cover with propagating mix in spring to early summer. Place in a warm position with good light and keep moist.

Use & Harvesting: Berries edible. Berries were eaten fresh or pounded together on a stone dish, making a paste which was placed to dry and then eaten during winter or when needed. Berries mature from January to March.



Watch local Aboriginal elder Uncle Doug speak about Ngurp, Muntharr
<https://youtu.be/OopZ8dYUSUg>



Photo: Kieran Smith

Lavatera plebeia

SE Aboriginal Name: Unknown

Common Name: Australian hollyhock

Form & Size: Herbaceous erect perennial to 4 m high.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Fairly tolerant of soil type, probable preference for well drained soil. Sunny position.

Cultivation: Sow seeds in spring, plant seedlings out in early summer.

Use & Harvesting: Fibrous roots eaten, possibly raw or cooked. Bark used for making string. Young leaves were possibly eaten raw or cooked.



Leucopogon parviflorus

SE Aboriginal Name: Ngoor-le

Common Name: Coast beard-heath, Native currant

Form & Size: Shrub with dense foliage up to 3 m. Dark oblong leaves to 3 cm, with pointed tip. Flowers - white in clusters. Fruit - globular white when ripe, succulent.

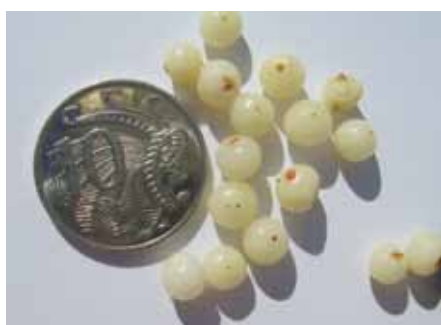
Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Sandy soils over limestone or granite. Tolerates coastal conditions.

Cultivation: Sow fresh seed from April to early winter just beneath soil. Place in cool partial shade and keep moist. Allow several months for germination. Stratification of seed may help reduce germination time.

Use & Harvesting: Fruit eaten fresh when ripe. Fruit ripens in December to January. Contains small hard seed.



Watch local Aboriginal elder Uncle Doug speak about Ngoor-le
<https://youtu.be/a5yxQ0BCWVg>



Lomandra longifolia

SE Aboriginal Name: Karawun

Common Name: Spiny-headed mat-rush

Form & Size: In clump, up to 1m. Leaves - long, strap-like. Flowers - on spikes with small cream flowers with spines. Very hardy.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Sandy soils. Very hardy and very high tolerance to moisture and dryness.

Cultivation: Propagate by division over winter. To grow from seed lightly cover fresh seed with propagating mix or fine gravel in autumn. Keep moist in an open position. Germination can take up to two months.

Use & Harvesting: Flowers and base of leaves can be eaten. Leaves were used for making baskets and mats.



Microseris lanceolata

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| SE Aboriginal Name: | Murnong, Muurang |
| Common Name: | Yam daisy, Murnong |
| Form & Size: | Herb up to 30cm with yellow daisy-like flowers. |
| Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: | Grows well in full sun to part shade, all soil types and well-drained to dry conditions. It is drought and moderately frost tolerant. |
| Cultivation: | Cover fresh seed lightly in late winter to spring. Keep moist in an open position. |
| Use & Harvesting: | Radish-like tubers were dug up, washed and placed in ovens, often overnight and allowed to cook slowly. Tubers can also be eaten raw and are available spring, summer, autumn, less palatable in winter. |



Myoporum insulare

SE Aboriginal Name: Unknown

Common Name: Common boobialla

Form & Size: Large shrub to small tree, grows 2-5m. Thick light green fleshy leaves, white flowers winter to spring, purple berry fruit. Attracts birds and butterflies.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Full sun. Thrives in well drained sandy soils in coastal habitats but can tolerate regions with lengthy wet periods and heavy soils. Known to be frost tolerant.

Cultivation: Grow vegetatively with fresh but firm new tip growth. To grow from seed cover seed with 2-3mm of sandy loam compost propagating mix or fine gravel. Sow fresh seed late summer to autumn. Place in open position with some shade on hot days.

Use & Harvesting: When ripe the fruit can be eaten.



Olearia axillaris

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|---------------------------------|--|
| SE Aboriginal Name: | Unknown |
| Common Name: | Coast daisy-bush |
| Form & Size: | Medium to tall shrub with many branches, up to 3m. Aromatic foliage. White daisy like flowers in summer and autumn. |
| Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: | Full sun to semi shade. Found in sand dunes, and also appears on limestone and rocky slopes along the coastline. |
| Cultivation: | In late winter to spring cover fresh seed lightly with propagating mix. Keep moist in an open position. |
| Use & Harvesting: | Used as an insect repellent by aboriginal people who would rub the foliage over their skin to release the aroma from the leaves. |



Pelargonium australe

SE Aboriginal Name: Unknown

Common Name: Australian pelargonium, Austral storks bill

Form & Size: Small, herbaceous plant to about 0.5 metres high.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Hardy in a range of soils and prefers full sun or light shade.

Cultivation: Lightly cover seed from autumn, keep moist.

Use & Harvesting: Roots were eaten.



Phragmites australis

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| SE Aboriginal Name: | Charr-ak |
| Common Name: | Common reed |
| Form & Size: | Tall reed 1-3m in height. Branchlets are rigid and erect, bamboo-like, sometimes reaching 5m. Leaves - long, tapering 20-50cm. Flowers - pale. Fluffy, at the end of the stems. |
| Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: | Thrives in slow moving water from 250mm to 1m as well as swamp areas, marshlands and marginal areas. Suitable for coastal waterways with higher salt levels. |
| Cultivation: | Propagate by root division. |
| Use & Harvesting: | Harvest in spring. Aboriginals in other parts of the country used the leaves for weaving. Tall strong stems were used for spears. Indigenous North Americans used the strong stems of their local varieties as arrow shafts. Stalks are used for roof thatching in parts of Europe. |



Rhagodia candolleana spp candolleana

SE Aboriginal Name: Unknown

Common Name: Sea-Berry Salt Bush

Form & Size: Spreading shrub of several metres. Leaves - somewhat fleshy and oblong.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Grows in exposed or shaded areas. Tolerances - Wet, Saline, Coastal, Shade.

Cultivation: Lightly cover seed with propagating mix from early winter to spring. Keep moist in an open position.

Use & Harvesting: Deep red ripe fruit were sometimes eaten, though they are not very tasty. Fruit ripens from summer to autumn. Leaves may have been eaten. Fruit was used to dye patterns in clothing.



Sambucus gaudichaudiana

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|---------------------------------|--|
| SE Aboriginal Name: | Unknown |
| Common Name: | White Elderberry |
| Form & Size: | Upright herbaceous perennial sub-shrub with annual stems to 35cm. |
| Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: | Moist well drained soils, often amongst rocks in cool shaded mountain forests. Semi-shade to dappled shade |
| Cultivation: | Grow cuttings of mature wood of the current season's growth, 15 - 20cm with a heel, in late autumn. |
| Use & Harvesting: | Fleshy fruits eaten raw. |



Sarcocornia quinqueflora

SE Aboriginal Name: Unknown

Common Name: Samphire, Beaded Glasswort

Form & Size: Spreading prostrate succulent plant.

Soil Type, Position,
Tolerance: Generally
present in saline
conditions, on fringes
of salty water bodies.

Cultivation: Propagate vegetatively into similar growing conditions of the parent plant.

Use & Harvesting: An edible green. Can be blanched or pickled.



Scaevola calendulacea

SE Aboriginal Name: Unknown

Common Name: Dune Fan-flower

Form & Size: Sprawling leafy creeper to 1m wide with thick and hairy foliage. Fan-shaped flowers, pale blue colour most of the year and a purple coloured berry.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Good drainage and deep sandy soil.

Cultivation: In early winter sow the hard bony endocarps beneath 5mm of well drained sandy propagating mix. Keep moist.

Use & Harvesting: Salty-sweet taste. Purplish coloured berries can be eaten.



Photo: Elspeth Swan



Photo: DEWNR



Photo: DEWNR

Tetragonia implexicoma

SE Aboriginal Name: Unknown

Common Name: Bower spinach

Form & Size: Scrambling prostrate semi shrub with prostrate branches to 3m or more, often inclined to climb over other vegetation. Leaves - succulent, oblong to lance shaped to 5cm. Fruit - globular, succulent.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Tolerances - Wet, Dry, Saline, Coastal, Shade.

Cultivation: Grow from cuttings.

Use & Harvesting: Leaves and young stems edible, can be blanched and used like spinach or Warrigal greens.



Triglochin procera

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| SE Aboriginal Name: | Nereli |
| Common Name: | Water ribbons |
| Form & Size: | Water plant that has many dark green strap-like leaves which float on the water surface, up to 1m long. Tall stalk that bear flowers. |
| Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: | Required to be submerged in freshwater to 1.5m deep or areas subject to regular inundation. |
| Cultivation: | Grow by division in spring. |
| Use & Harvesting: | Tubers are crisp and sweet and were cooked in ground ovens and eaten. Can be eaten raw. Fruit may have been eaten. |



Typha domingensis

SE Aboriginal Name: Cumbungi, Poorteech, Manangkari

Common Name: Cumbungi, Bulrush

Form & Size: Reed-like plant which can reach 2m. Branchlets can also grow to 2m terminating with a clustered flower head. Leaves - thick, soft, narrow to approximately 1m. Flower heads up to 20cm, bright brown and velvety feel.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Grows on the edge of wetlands and permanent lakes and swamps.

Cultivation: Propagate by root division.

Use & Harvesting: New shoots and underground stems (rhizomes) were eaten. Roots were cooked and roasted, then chewed. Sometimes the roots were twisted, and with the loosening of the fibres, a quantity of gluten resembling flour was shaken out and used for making dough-like material. In other parts of the globe the leaves of other varieties of Typha were used for thatching and weaving. Flowers were used as down. Split flower stalks were also used for weaving.



Xanthorrhoea australis

SE Aboriginal Name: Bukkup

Common Name: Austral grass-tree

Form & Size: Large perennial herb that develops a trunk, up to 2m, supporting a dense crown of grass-like leaves. Flower heads up to 150cm on long stems up to 250cm, white to cream in colour.

Soil Type, Position, Tolerance: Well drained soil. Frost tolerant. Full sun or semi shade.

Cultivation: Early spring to autumn cover seed with 4mm of soil or fine gravel. Keep moist in an open, sunny position.

Use & Harvesting: Soft bases of the young leaves were chewed for their sweet, nutty taste. Young roots were also known to be succulent. Nectar from the tiny white flowers was licked and eaten. A sweet drink could be made by soaking the flower stalk in water. Seeds from the flower stalk can be crushed into flour. The soft wood of the flower spike was used as the base for a fire drill. The stalk could be used to make the shaft for a light-weight spear. Resin from the trunk was melted to make a strong adhesive for binding materials together, e.g. a sharp stone to a spear shaft. Resin could also be used as a waterproofing agent. It dries very hard.



Sourcing of Plants for your Garden

LOCAL NURSERIES

With regards to sourcing plants for your own garden the following nurseries stock many indigenous species:

Mimosa Farm Trees

Location: 412 Bones Road
Mount Schank SA 5291
Web: www.mimosafarmtrees.com
Phone: (08) 8738 8070
E-mail: mimosa2@bigpond.com

Nature Glenelg Trust Community Nursery

Web: www.natureglenelg.org.au

Eucaleuca Native Nursery

Location: Thompsons Rd, Naracoorte SA 5271
Phone: (08) 8762 2061

Burrandies *Plants grown upon request*

Web: www.burrandies.org
Phone: (08) 8725 6200
E-mail: admin@burrandies.org

COLLECTING PLANTS AND SEED FROM THE WILD

Collecting plants and seed from the wild can potentially have a negative impact on local ecosystems. A permit from the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR) is required to collect any native plants or plant material from public lands in South Australia. Collecting on private land requires a permit under certain circumstances; however you should always seek permission from the landowner. More information and application forms can be found on the DEWNR website: http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/Do_It_Online/Plant_permits Bringing in plants from other regions to the South East can result in a sterile generation for some species, so this is not advised.

EXTRA INFORMATION ON GROWING NATIVE PLANTS

Growing Native Plants, Australian National Botanic Gardens

www.anbg.gov.au/gnp

Florabank Fact Sheets, Greening Australia

www.florabank.org.au/lucid/key/Species%20Navigator/Media/Html/index.htm

NATIVE FOOD LINKS

Aboriginal Use Plants of the Greater Melbourne Area

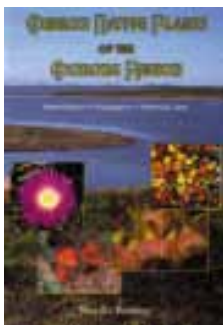
www.latrobe.edu.au/wildlife/downloads/Aboriginal-plant-use-list.pdf

Greenlink Box Hill Inc.

www.sites.google.com/site/greenlinkboxhill/information-papers/aboriginal-uses-of-local-plants

NEVILLE BONNEY'S BOOKS ON SOUTH EAST PLANTS

For more detailed information on the plants listed in this guide (and many others), The following books are fantastic resources.



Common Native Plants of the Coorong Region: Identification, Propagation, Historical uses.
Neville Bonney



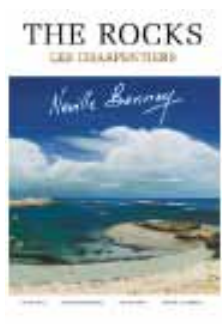
Uses of Native Plants in the South East of South Australia by the Indigenous People before 1839.
Neville Bonney



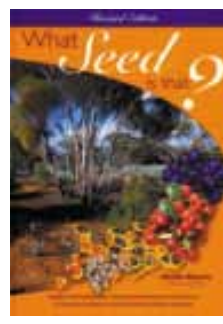
What South East Native Plant Is That?
Neville Bonney



Knowing Growing Eating Edible Wild Native Plants for Southern Australia.
Neville Bonney



The Rocks: Les Charpentiers.
Leonie O'Meara
Neville Bonney



What Seed Is That? A guide to the identification, collection, germination and establishment of native plant species for central southern Australian landscapes.
Neville Bonney

Neville's books can be purchased directly from him by contacting him via e-mail: nbonney@senet.com.au

They can also be purchased at:
Collins Booksellers Mount Gambier
32 Commercial Street West
Mount Gambier

DISCLAIMER.

The City of Mount Gambier does not take any responsibility for any adverse effects from the use of plants identified in this publication. The information provided is just a guide and is simply stating which plants of the region Aboriginal people are known to have eaten or used for materials. Some people have been known to have negative bodily reactions when eating plants that they are not used to. As with any new food, caution is advised, especially with regards to potential allergic reactions. Always consult a medical professional before trying unknown foods. Never eat a plant unless you know exactly what it is. Do not eat wetland plants that are growing in areas that can accumulate pollutants e.g. urban drainage infrastructure.

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