

Old Man Saltbush



Scientific name: *Atriplex nummularia*

Aboriginal name: Tyulern (Vic)



Plant habit



Leaf form



Male flower

About ...

There are about 61 different species of Saltbush growing across Australia. Old Man Saltbush or Giant Saltbush is a very adaptable plant found in many soil types across Australia. It is a fast-growing, evergreen shrub.

This plant is frequently used as food for cattle and sheep and is often planted near property homesteads as a shelter. It provides a useful windbreak which, along with readily visible leaves at night, makes it suitable for roadside plantings. The leaves are also fire retardant.

Due to its ability to withstand saline and drought conditions, Old Man Saltbush is being trialled as a solution to Australia's increasing salinity problem.

Aboriginal Uses

- Woody branches used as fuel for fires
- Used as a windbreak
- Collected the minute saltbush seeds to grind and roast for damper
- Large fresh blanched saltbush leaves used as a wrap around meat or fish, in salads or as a leafy bed for grilled meat or vegetables
- Dried saltbush flakes can be added to damper

Family

CHENOPODIACEAE

Climate

Semi-arid to arid regions

Habitat

Found in many different habitat types
Found on saline, clay soils in low lying areas like flood plains
Very adaptable to most soil types
Frost and salt tolerant

Form

Large multi-stemmed shrub from near ground level
Height: 3 m
Width: 2 – 4 m

Foliage

Leaves have a salty, scaly coating which gives them a silvery-grey colour
Elliptical to almost circular in shape
Soft leaves between 10 – 30 mm long
High salt content

Flower

Produced throughout the year
Wind pollination
Male and female flowers on separate plants
Female: dense clusters about 200 mm long
Male: separate globules at end of stems



Used as food



Used as medicine



Used as resources



Local to SW WA

Caution: Do not prepare bush tucker food without having been shown by Indigenous or experienced persons. Some bush tucker if eaten in large quantities or not prepared correctly can cause illness.