

# Zamia



Scientific name: *Macrozamia riedlei*

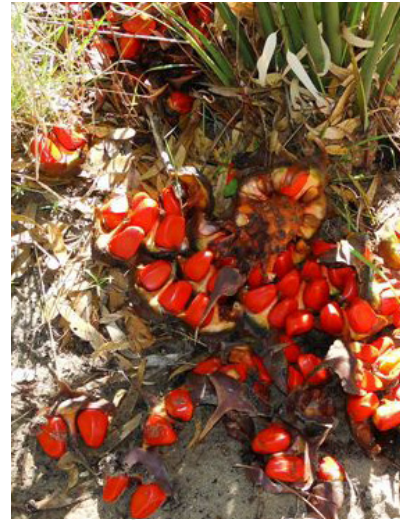
Aboriginal name: Jeerji (Noongar)



Plant habit



Seed cone



Seed (Photo: Pam Agar)

## About ...

This plant is a cycad and thus has separate male and female plants. The male plant produces the pollen, while the female plant produces the seed. Only the female cones were eaten by the Noongar people.

Early European settlers became ill after eating the seeds without proper preparation, due to the level of toxins and carcinogens.

Proper care must be taken to prepare the seeds (through a lengthy process) for eating!

## Aboriginal Uses

- The toxic seeds were used as a food by Aboriginals after extensive processing, European explorers were poisoned from eating them raw
- After treatment, the pulp which encases the seed is roasted before eating, it tastes similar to a tomato
- Raw seeds were ground into a powder and used to 'stun' fish in local waterways to make the fish easier to catch
- The woolly material found around the base of the fronds on top of the trunk was used as fire tinder or as an absorbent fibre for hygienic purposes

<b>Family</b>	ZAMIACEAE
<b>Climate</b>	Temperate
<b>Habitat</b>	Jarrah forests south of Perth to Albany Banksia woodlands
<b>Form</b>	Medium-size shrub Short trunk with leaves from the base Palm-like Height: 0.5 – 3 m
<b>Foliage</b>	Few leaves radiating from trunk Glossy with narrow leaflets Tough Bright-to-deep green Length: 1 – 2 m
<b>Seed</b>	Produced Djilba to Kambarang (September to October) Oval-shaped seed cone Length: 25 – 35 cm Width: 14 – 18 cm Ripe Bunuru (February to March)

Developed by SERCUL for use with the *Bush Tucker Education Program*.



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.