

Native edible plantings for cool climate temperate regions

Planting philosophy

- Permaculture principles - making as closed a system as possible
- Aiming for virtually no external input for water, nutrients, and plantings over the course of the years
- Minimal intervention
- Work with the climate, soil, and water conditions, rather than force plantings to grow too far out of their natural seasons or range
- Continuous improvement to improve soil, groundwater holding properties, reduce run-off, and retain nutrients where they're required – in the plantings – rather than leaching elsewhere
- Focus is on cool temperate Australian native and exotic plants
- Many plantings will be experimental, testing their suitability for small-scale commercial supply
- Many of the native Australian plants are planned as part of bush regeneration activities as well as harvesting capabilities (including for cut flowers)

Short list of most accessible or desired plants

A summary of the most accessible, easy-to-grow, and/or potentially commercial viable plants for the region.

Common name	Latin name
Appleberry	<i>Billardiera scandens</i>
Bower spinach	<i>Tetragonia implexicoma</i>
Bush tomato, also desert raisin	<i>Solanum centrale</i>
Forestberry herb, also strawberry gum	<i>Eucalyptus olida</i>
Mintbush	<i>Prostanthera rotundifolia</i>
Mountain pepperbush (multiple varieties)	<i>Tasmannia spp.</i>
Muntries, also emu apple, also native cranberry	<i>Kunzea pomifera</i>
Native mint	<i>Mentha australis</i>
Pigface	<i>Carpobrotus glaucescens</i>

Saltbush (multiple varieties)	<i>Atriplex nummularia</i> and others
Salty ice plant	<i>Mesembryanthemum crystallinum</i>
Warrigal greens, also Botany Bay greens, also New Zealand spinach, also tetragon	<i>Tetragonia tetragonioides</i>
Yam daisy, or Murnong	<i>Microseris lanceolata</i>

List in plaintext

1. Appleberry, *Billardiera scandens*
2. Bower spinach, *Tetragonia implexicoma*
3. Bush tomato, also desert raisin, *Solanum centrale*
4. Forestberry herb, also strawberry gum, *Eucalyptus olida*
5. Mintbush, *Prostanthera rotundifolia* and *P.incisa* (often called "Native thyme")
6. Mountain pepperbush (multiple varieties), *Tasmannia* spp. (*P.lanceolata* and *T.stipitata* are most readily available).
7. Muntries, also emu apple, also native cranberry, *Kunzea pomifera*
8. Pigface, *Carpobrotus glaucescens*
9. River (or native) mint, *Mentha australis*
10. Saltbush (multiple varieties), *Atriplex nummularia* and others
11. Salty ice plant, *Mesembryanthemum crystalline*
12. Warrigal greens, also Botany Bay greens, also New Zealand spinach, also tetragon, *Tetragonia tetragonioides*
13. Yam daisy, or Murnong, *Microseris lanceolata*

Comprehensive list

This is a list of everything that is either known to grow in the region, or should grow if tried and given care at certain times.

Common name	Latin name	Commercial use	Planting comments	Irrigation/fertiliser needs
Aniseed myrtle, also Ringwood, Aniseed Tree	<i>Syzygium anisatum</i>	<p>Leaves used fresh and dried as condiment, flavours, teas. Best presented as finely ground (as a herb), coarsely crushed (for tea), or whole (for cooking).</p> <p>Can be dried naturally on the branch in low humidity.</p> <p>Otherwise, requires air circulation.</p> <p>Very long shelf life in whole format when stored in a cool, dark, dry location.</p> <p>Best under three months when ground. Must be in an airtight container for sale and storage when ground.</p> <p>Flowers are small but also aromatic and edible.</p>	<p>Tree.</p> <p>May hedge - as a tall hedge, not short.</p> <p>Unlikely to do well in very exposed areas, requires frost protection in first few years, but can grow very tall - up to 4 metres - in protected areas (courtyards, against walls, etc). More vulnerable to wind and scorching than temperature; can do well on southern walls.</p>	<p>Warm rainforest plant. Tolerates coastal and hinterland sites as far south as Sapphire Coast of NSW.</p> <p>Can grow in drier setups but requires consistent water and protection from temperature extremes. Will be slower to establish. May produce a richer-flavoured leaf with less rain.</p>

Common name	Latin name	Commercial use	Planting comments	Irrigation/fertiliser needs
Appleberry	<i>Billardiera scandens</i>	<p>Fruit used fresh and processed.</p> <p>Fruits in late summer/autumn - Feb/Mar. Tastes like stewed apple. Slightly sticky/mealy texture, not unpleasant. Small unobtrusive seeds.</p> <p>Fruits are best when fully ripe, when they are very soft and slightly translucent, and the skin a little wrinkled. They do ripen off the vine. Surprisingly resistant to mould when kept in a dry kitchen or fridge (unlike strawberries etc).</p> <p>Suit farmer's market and direct sales. Suit freezing and dehydrating. Not currently suited for bulk packaging and supply due to softness. Handle like berries.</p>	<p>Climbing, twining plant, very like a climbing pea in nature. Rapid grower. Yellow bell-shaped flowers.</p> <p>Narrow, sparse branches and leaves. Really likes wire.</p> <p>Gets woody as it ages.</p> <p>Responds to pruning.</p> <p>Re-establishes well from root if damaged.</p> <p>Indigenous to SE NSW. Establishes naturally in all locations, but prefers dappled shaded locations under eucalypt. Shallow-rooted.</p>	<p>May need irrigation to establish.</p> <p>Mulching against dry weather recommended.</p> <p>May need supplemental irrigation at specific times of year to promote consistent fruiting.</p>
Boab root/tuber	<i>Adansonia gregorii</i>	<p>Immature root and leaves of the boab tree.</p> <p>Annual when used in this way.</p> <p>Leaves used fresh and in cooked.</p> <p>Root is starchy, a little slimy, generally quite long and narrow. Mild neutral flavour, crisp texture, very like arrowroot or water chestnut. Can be used like any root vegetable.</p> <p>Treat like other root vegetables for storage.</p>	<p>Tree is unlikely to grow to maturity in this region. Would need to constantly source and plant seed. Technically likes humid and heat, so would probably have to be started in greenhouses and planted out when last frost has passed - maybe December.</p> <p>Could be good in greenhouses.</p> <p>Have not yet trialled it in this region.</p>	<p>Unsure. May need carrot-like conditions – sand, warmth, and water.</p> <p>See document "Commercialisation of Boab Tubers" for details.</p>

Common name	Latin name	Commercial use	Planting comments	Irrigation/fertiliser needs
Bower spinach	<i>Tetragonia implexicoma</i>	Leaves used fresh or processed. See warrigal greens for commercial notes.	Prostrate scrambling herb, related - and with similar needs - to warrigal greens. Could make good under-planting for larger plants, such as orchard trees or berry shrubs.	Requires irrigation if transplanting seedlings. No regular irrigation or fertilisation needs. Mulching against dry weather recommended. May need supplemental irrigation in extremely dry conditions to protect against plant death.
Broad-leaved peppermint	<i>Eucalyptus dives</i>	Leaves used fresh (external/cosmetic use only) or dried (culinary uses) Strong pepperminty scent and flavour. Has botanical/health applications as well as culinary.	Extensive plantation outside Windellama. Seems to cope with the region very well. Grows into a medium-sized elegant tree in this region. Must be trimmed regularly to keep to a harvestable size. Like most gums, coppices readily and responds to stress by shooting from the root. Extremely hardy once established; doesn't seem prone to insect attack.	None once established.

Common name	Latin name	Commercial use	Planting comments	Irrigation/fertiliser needs
Bush tomato, also desert raisin	<i>Solanum centrale</i>	<p>Fruit used dried. Is best when dried on the plant and harvested.</p> <p>Small fruit, approx. size of a small cherry tomato. Colour and texture of sundried tomato.</p> <p>Has sweet and savoury applications - rich, sun-dried tomato flavour, with caramel overtones and a not-unpleasant bitter aftertaste. Classic umami flavours.</p> <p>Can be used whole to infuse flavours, but is very concentrated and not best-suited to being eaten whole.</p> <p>Best sliced or ground into a powder (traditionally called "akadjura" or "kutjera" in the desert languages when in this form).</p> <p>Very long shelf life when stored whole. Loses very little flavour when ground and stored, but texture may change from damp powder to a very dry one.</p>	<p>Low, woody shrub with sparse leaves and potato-like flowers.</p> <p>It will appreciate the extremely hot, dry summers in our region, but may need persuasion to flower and set fruit before autumn fully sets in.</p> <p>Once established, naturally dies down to underground root system over winter, which comes back in spring.</p> <p>Cloches to encourage new growth in early spring, removed once the dry heat sets in, could help bring on growth.</p> <p>Difficult to germinate from fruit/seed; is more reliable from cuttings or by allowing to sucker from roots. Will naturally form groves if not kept contained.</p>	<p>Technically a perennial, but treated like an annual in our region.</p> <p>Mulching against dry weather recommended.</p> <p>May need irrigation to establish.</p> <p>May need supplemental irrigation at specific times of year to encourage fruiting.</p> <p>See document "The Bush Tomato Handbook" (Ninti One) for more information.</p>
Coastal Daisybush or Wild Rosemary	<i>Olearia axillaris</i>	Leaves used fresh and dried.	<p>Herb.</p> <p>Don't have experience with this one yet. Added it in as coastal plants tend to do well in this region.</p>	<p>Note: NOT coastal rosemary.</p> <p>Seaside plant.</p>
Desert lime	<i>Citrus glauca</i>	Fruit used fresh and processed.	Small tree/shrub. Works well in pots and protected against frost initially.	<p>Desert plant.</p> <p>May need irrigation to establish.</p> <p>May need irrigation at specific times of year to encourage fruiting.</p>

Common name	Latin name	Commercial use	Planting comments	Irrigation/fertiliser needs
Fingerlime	<i>Citrus australasica</i>	Fruit used fresh and processed.	<p>Small, extremely prickly tree.</p> <p>Should hedge well; could form a good animal barrier around kitchen gardens (for eg).</p> <p>Unlikely to do well in very exposed areas, requires frost protection in first few years, but can grow very tall - up to 4 metres - in protected areas (courtyards, against walls, etc). More vulnerable to wind and scorching than temperature; can do well on southern walls.</p>	<p>Rainforest plant.</p> <p>May have irrigation needs in excess of site's ability to supply.</p>
Forestberry herb, also strawberry gum	<i>Eucalyptus olida</i>	<p>Leaves picked and used fresh or dried.</p> <p>Potential use in pot pourri as well.</p>	<p>Northern NSW eucalyptus. Grows into a medium-sized elegant tree in this region. Must be trimmed regularly to keep to a harvestable size.</p> <p>Like most gums, coppices readily and responds to stress by shooting from the root.</p> <p>Extremely hardy once established; doesn't seem prone to insect attack.</p>	<p>Maybe irrigation to establish.</p> <p>No regular irrigation or fertilisation needs.</p> <p>Mulching against dry weather recommended.</p> <p>May need supplemental irrigation in extremely dry conditions to protect against plant death.</p>
Illawarra plum, also Mountain plum-pine	<p><i>Podocarpus elatus</i></p> <p><i>Podocarpus lawrencei</i></p>	Fruit used fresh, dried, frozen, processed.	<p>Tree or prostrate shrub (<i>P.lawrencei</i>).</p> <p>A very tall tree in sub-tropical regions; probably smaller in cooler climates.</p> <p>Recommend planting with other orchard plants.</p>	<p>Requires soil preparation and irrigation to establish.</p> <p>May need irrigation at specific times of year to encourage fruiting.</p>

Common name	Latin name	Commercial use	Planting comments	Irrigation/fertiliser needs
Kerguelen cabbage	<i>Pringlea antiscorbutica</i>	Leaves used fresh.	Leafy annual. No experience with plant at all - mentioned as a coastal island plant, "very hardy", worth trying to source.	No regular irrigation or fertilisation needs. Mulching against dry weather recommended.
Lemon myrtle	<i>Backhousia citriodora</i>	Leaves used fresh and dried.	Tree. May hedge - as a tall hedge, not short. Unlikely to do well in very exposed areas, requires frost protection in first few years, but can grow very tall - up to 4 metres - in protected areas (courtyards, against walls, etc). More vulnerable to wind and scorching than temperature; can do well on southern walls.	Rainforest plant. May have irrigation needs in excess of site's ability to supply.
Lillypilly (multiple varieties)	<i>Syzigium paniculatum</i> <i>Syzigium oleosum</i> <i>Acmena smithii</i>	Tree. Berries used fresh and dried. Some varieties have very colourful seeds that may have secondary uses in the decorative/jewellery market.	Tree. Hedges well - many hedging varieties now available. Unlikely to do well in very exposed areas, requires frost protection in first few years, but can grow very tall - up to 4 metres - in protected areas (courtyards, against walls, etc). More vulnerable to wind and scorching than temperature; can do well on southern walls. Note: some extremely large trees in Katoomba, upper Blue Mountains, prob. <i>A.smithii</i> . More humid and less windy, but promising.	Requires soil preparation and irrigation to establish. May need irrigation at specific times of year to encourage fruiting.

Common name	Latin name	Commercial use	Planting comments	Irrigation/fertiliser needs
Mintbush, also native basil, native thyme	<i>Prostanthera rotundifolia</i> <i>Prostanthera incisa</i>	Leaves picked and used fresh or dried	Medium shrub. Grows very well in this climate. Hedges well. Lovely purple flowers that are well-loved by bees; may be suitable for the cut flower market. Flowers are edible to the best of my knowledge. Relatively short life; can become straggly at about 5-6 years of age, Regular trimming may extend life.	Maybe soil improvement and irrigation to establish. No regular irrigation or fertilisation needs. Mulching against dry weather recommended. May need supplemental irrigation in extremely dry conditions to protect against plant death.
Mountain pepperbush (multiple varieties)	<i>Tasmannia spp.</i>	Leaves and berries used fresh and dried. T. lanceolata - Mountain pepperbush. T. stipitata - Dorrigo pepper T. insipida - incorrectly called Dorrigo pepper in "Wild Lime". T. xerophila - Alpine or snow pepper. Wild Lime says is has leaves and berries hotter than the two more common ones. T. purpurescens - Broad leaf pepperbush. T. glaucifolia - Fragrant Pepperbush T.membranea – Pepper Tree T.vickeriana - Baw Baw pepper T.piperita	Medium shrub/tree (in ideal circumstances). Loves the cold; doesn't like wind or sun. Can be planted quite tightly together. May do best in shade houses in this region, with misting to increase humidity. A good understory planting; is naturally found on the drip line of local wattles. Prefers shade, either deep or dappled. Could be surprisingly hardy in otherwise-difficult dark, shaded corridors next to houses.	Requires improved soil and shaded damp conditions. May require shadehouse and misting during summer.

Common name	Latin name	Commercial use	Planting comments	Irrigation/fertiliser needs
Muntries, also emu apple, also native cranberry	<i>Kunzea pomifera</i>	Berries used fresh, dried, frozen, etc.	Prostrate/scrambling shrub. Naturally found on the coast. Can be trained along trellis for easier commercial handling. Excellent woody ground cover plant.	Requires improved friable soil to establish. May need supplemental irrigation in extremely dry conditions to encourage fruiting.
Native mint, also river mint	<i>Mentha australis</i> (and others)	Forb (leafy herb).	Thin, woody stems with sparse leaves. Requires exactly the same conditions as exotic mints, but is slightly less invasive than spearmint and can be out-competed by it in an exclusive mint garden bed. Goes very woody if not cut back regularly. Dies back in winter.	Requires improved soil and sunny damp conditions. Hoping to establish in a naturally damp location. Otherwise, will require irrigation.
Native potato	<i>Platysace spp.</i>	Root/tuber	Information found online; no experience at this stage. Worth investigating.	Unsure: see documentation for more information. WA plant. For experimenting.

Common name	Latin name	Commercial use	Planting comments	Irrigation/fertiliser needs
Pigface	<i>Carpobrotus glaucescens</i>	<p>Fruit used fresh</p> <p>Leaves are edible but astringent - potential as a pickled/preserved vegetable</p>	<p>Prostrate scrambling shrub, native to coastal regions but, like most coastal plants, grows well in this region.</p> <p>Large, brightly-coloured flowers that close at night. Not good as cut flowers, but look amazing en masse in a garden bed.</p> <p>Particularly good as an edging plant or allowed to spill over terracing - which also makes it easier to harvest.</p> <p>Can die back somewhat in winter, but will come back.</p> <p>Main plant can get woody as it gets older; constant replenishment keeps the plantings looking lush.</p> <p>Note: goats adore it.</p>	<p>No regular irrigation or fertilisation needs.</p> <p>Mulching against dry weather recommended.</p> <p>May need supplemental irrigation in extremely dry conditions to encourage fruiting.</p>
Pigweed, also purslane	<i>Portulaca oleracea</i>	<p>Note: this is the variety native to Australia.</p> <p>Leaves used fresh.</p> <p>Seeds are microscopic but extremely nutritious and may be worth collecting in mass plantings.</p>	<p>Fleshy, prostrate forb.</p> <p>Many people think it's a weed and don't realise it's edible. Small, spreading plant, pretty red stems and green leaves. Can form a light living mulch in large quantities.</p> <p>If seed collection is desired, need to plan a means for catching them - they're miniscule.</p> <p>Fruit in early autumn.</p>	<p>No regular irrigation or fertilisation needs.</p> <p>Mulching against dry weather recommended.</p>

Common name	Latin name	Commercial use	Planting comments	Irrigation/fertiliser needs
Saltbush (multiple varieties)	<i>Atriplex nummularia</i> and others	Leaves used fresh and dried. Where berries are large enough to harvest, edible and tasty. (Ruby Saltbush is one known for its berries).	Forbs and shrubs. Many varieties around - to the best of my knowledge, all are edible, although wildly variable in actual palatability. Most varieties hedge well, although prostrate forms are better in low settings. Old Man Saltbush or de Kock saltbush are the classic varieties used for human and stock feed. Can grow extremely tall - I've got ones over 2m in height - but very amenable to being trimmed to a nice 1m-1.5m height. Gets very woody as it gets older. Must be protected against stock, as all ruminants love it.	Maybe soil improvement and irrigation to establish. No regular irrigation or fertilisation needs.
Salty ice plant	<i>Mesembryant h-emum crystallinum</i>	Leaves used fresh or processed. Currently gaining popularity as a seasoning, salat leaf and garnish; very high commercial potential.	Prostrate scrambling herb. I believe it's an annual, but may self-seed well.	Requires irrigation if transplanting seedlings. No regular irrigation or fertilisation needs. Mulching against dry weather recommended. May need supplemental irrigation in extremely dry conditions to protect against plant death.
Snowberry	<i>Gaulthiera hispida</i>	Berries used fresh.	Climbing shrub. A cool-climate plant. Will need supports.	Requires improved soil and shaded damp conditions. May require shadehouse and misting during summer.

Common name	Latin name	Commercial use	Planting comments	Irrigation/fertiliser needs
Warrigal greens, also Botany Bay greens, also New Zealand spinach, also tetragon	<i>Tetragonia tetragonioides</i>	Leaves used fresh or processed.	<p>Prostrate scrambling herb.</p> <p>Forms very large patches if left unchecked. Generally a low scrambling plant, but can get up to 60cm high when young and in ideal circumstances.</p> <p>Performs best when out of direct sunlight. Excellent understory and shaded planting; also a good living mulch.</p> <p>Relatively short-lived annual, but self-seeds reliably and ensures its own consistent supply.</p> <p>Does adapt to frosty areas. Will die down to a woody stem and leaves get quite small if exposed, but more damp and protected areas can keep producing well all through winter.</p>	<p>Requires irrigation if transplanting seedlings.</p> <p>No regular irrigation or fertilisation needs.</p> <p>Mulching against dry weather recommended.</p> <p>May need supplemental irrigation in extremely dry conditions to protect against plant death.</p>
Yam daisy, also Murnong	<i>Microseris lanceolata</i>	Roots	<p>Narrow-stemmed climbing or open plant. Regrows from root rather than seed, but can be established by seed (slower). Suitable for large-scale planting for summer display of yellow flowers.</p> <p>Leaves and flowers (and probably roots) extremely palatable to stock - must be protected. However, once an industry is re-established, may have significant potential as a stock feed.</p>	<p>Unsure, but endemic to eastern Australia region, including inland.</p>