

## Atriplex species

*Atriplex nummularia* is the largest of the Australian Saltbushes growing as a woody shrub to 3m tall x 2 - 4m wide and has attractive elliptical to circular silvery grey leaves that have a scaly coating, small flowers occur throughout the year, these are wind pollinated and the female flowers produce the fruiting bracteoles that are attached only at the base, are approximately 1cm wide and in the shape of a fan.

The leaves and seeds are often used in bush tucker and have a salty flavour - they are rich in protein, antioxidants and minerals. Use them as a leafy vegetable by your preferred method of cooking - blanch, saute, in salads, in stuffings or can be dried and used as a herb.

It is found naturally widespread in the inland semi-arid regions of mainland Australia - usually growing on saline clay soils in low lying areas but is very adaptable and can be grown in most climates and soils.

Best in well drained soil in full sun (can take some shade), it is frost hardy but protect from very hard frosts if possible.

This is a fantastic Australian native bush tucker plant that can make a real statement in the home garden, it is low maintenance, can be used as a gap filler, doesn't mind pruning so can be used as a hedge or a screen, attracts bees and insects and can even be grown in pots.

### Propagation

**Pre-treatment** – Seeds require a pre-treatment prior to sowing by soaking them in water for at least an hour to 24 hours or rubbing them under water for 15 – 30 minutes - this is to leach the salt out of them which inhibits germination.

**Sowing** – Best sown in Autumn or Spring. Use a good quality propagation mix with added washed river sand and sow into trays/tubes to be planted out later or can be directly planted out in situ.

Keep soil or propagation mix moist.