

Nitraria billardiera – Native Grape / Nitrebush

Nitraria billardiera is an evergreen low spreading shrub 1 to 2m tall x 2 to 4m wide with dense foliage of grey green leaves that grow in whorls along the stems and white flowers in Spring followed by red edible fruits in Summer to Autumn that taste like salty grapes!

Found growing naturally in very saline areas in inland and coastal regions on clay and loam soils in all states of Australia except for Tasmania.

Grows best in full sun in a medium well drained soil in an open position, can grow in tough conditions and is tolerant of both frost and drought. Better grown in areas with low humidity – warm temperate, cool temperate, Mediterranean, semi-arid and arid climates.

Prune if required to maintain a compact bushy habit after fruit.

This is a great bush tucker food, is a food source and habitat for birds, lizards and small mammals and is low maintenance with minimal supplementary watering needed when established.

Can be tricky to propagate by seed but not impossible!

Propagation

Method 1

Carefully crack the fruit in a vice to allow water to penetrate.

Soak the cracked fruit in water for 24 to 48 hours.

Sow 3mm deep in propagation mix, keep moist but not wet.

Method 2

Soak the seed in Gibberellic Acid – 1 part per thousand – for 24 hours, then in smoke water for 24 hours.

Sow seed in propagation mix, keep moist but not wet.

Both methods can take from 28 days to several months for seeds to germinate.