

## Eustrephus latifolius – Wombat Berry

Eustrephus latifolius, commonly known as the Wombat Berry is a reasonably vigorous twining plant or a scrambling ground cover. The leaves are lance-shaped to about 80mm long and have conspicuous longitudinal veins. Flowers are white or pale pink to mauve, about 15mm diameter and occur in Spring in the upper leaf axils. The flowers are followed by orange berries containing many shiny, black seeds. The fruits usually remain on the plant for many months.

Wombat berry is hardy in a range of soils and climates and is best if grown in a semi shaded position. It tolerates extended periods of dryness once established. It is not excessively vigorous and is unlikely to become a problem by smothering other plants.

The fleshy roots of the plant are edible. Propagation is best carried out from fresh seed. Wombat berry once established produces tubers and can be propagated by division of the tubers.

### Propagation

Propagation is straightforward without the need for pre-treatment of seed. Germination within 14 to 28 days at 18°C+.

**WHEN TO SOW** – Sow in warm areas or in a glass house - at any time. In frost prone areas sow when the danger of frost has passed.

**WHERE TO GROW** – Full sun or part shade in any well-drained soil. They can be grown in the garden or in large pots.

**SOWING** – Place seeds in a cup of near boiling water, leave overnight then drain and sow. Fill a pot or tray with moist sandy soil, wet thoroughly and compress. Sow seeds thinly on the surface and cover with a thin layer of soil. Keep the soil moist. Cover with clear polythene until germination in about 2 - 5 weeks.

**CULTIVATION** – Thin the seedlings out if crowded, transplant or pot at 5cm ensuring that you disturb the roots as little as possible. Water in well and water regularly until established, thereafter as needed. Protect against snails and slugs during germination and seedling stage.