

Your Green Prescription

My Melbourne local Top 10 Native Plants:



1. Bower Spinach



2. Coastal Saltbush



3. Lemon Myrtle



4. Native Raspberry



5. Native Sea Parsley



6. Noon Flower
(rounded)



7. Pigface (karkalla)



8. Ruby Saltbush
(sea berry)



9. Sea Rocket



10. Warrigal Greens

1. Bower Spinach (tetragonia implexiconia)

This one is a distant relative of both Warrigal Greens & Pigface. It's also known as "Sea Spinach." Bower Spinach is a scrambling plant/vine that grows in patches up to 5 metres high. It is often low laying at ground level and loves to be co-hosted by other plants in the "Bowers" which is where it takes it's name from.

The leaves & stems are a high source of vitamin C. Like many early plants in history, it was used for those first arriving by sea as a cure for Scurvy (due to the vitamin C within the plant.)

Bower Spinach has reddish-green stems like other similar succulent style plants. The leaves have a slightly more rounded shape compared to the more pointy, angular warrigal greens(tetragonia), this helps to tell it apart. The Leaves also store a lot of water so if you are ever short on water you can squeeze a few drops out of crushed leaves.

The salty leaves are edible, the structure of the leaves with their rough furry surface are ideal for entrapping salt. Closer to the Beach it will be more salty than its inland friends.

It has yellow flowers that are small, delicate and are made up of 4/5 rounded slim petals. When the flowers appear they omit a beautiful sweet fragrance. When the Flowers disappear, the Berries come out or sometimes concurrently you will find flowers & berries at the same time, this makes for a colourful visual array. The berries are pink, orange & red depending on the growth stage. When Red they are at their tastiest, as the Birds will attest.

2. Coastal Grey Saltbush (*atriplex cinerea*)

Coast Saltbush as its known locally starts out as a low shrub, but when established can grow up to 3 /4 metres high, It is very salt tolerant so is ideal for beach areas. This amazing plant is able to change the water table which enables other plants that are not as salt tolerant to grow near it.

The leaves are a silver/grey in colour and have a slightly furry appearance/feel. The interior of the plant stores salt from the ground & salt is trapped in the rough structure of the leaves.

The flower stems protrude in Spring from the branches and are positioned on the Tips of the branches. Forming globular clusters of purple/burgundy. The Bees & butterflies love them.

These bushes are ideal for all the Blue Fairy wrens which seek it's cover, along with a healthy lizard population hiding beneath its shrub like form.

You can dry the leaves and use as a salt substitute, this saltbush is a much milder plant. Meaning it has subtle salt flavour, unlike its inland cousin which has a more robust strong salt flavour. If you don't want to wait for it to dry out naturally (air dried) you can dry it out in the oven. You can blanche the leaves briefly & use like spinach-although being smaller leaves it can be a fiddly, slow process.

The leaves are great stir fried as well. I tempura batter the tips & flower and make a fritter also.

3. Lemon Myrtle(*backhousia citriodora*)

Lemon Scented Myrtle needs little introduction...Its well known for it's creamy lemon lime fragrance. It's glossy evergreen leaves infuse a beautiful, subtle flavour with a eucalyptus background into beverages & food. It's one of the more well-known bush foods in Australia. I consider it the Aussie version of kaffir lime leaves. Also a great alternative to Bay leaves.

Its creamy, white gold blossoms/flowers are also edible, along with the leaves & fruit. Pollinators love them & the native bees especially like them. They flower from Summer to Autumn or in some parts of Oz almost year round. The flower buds I use like capers for a lemony aroma & for garnishing dishes.

The elongated leaves omit a beautiful citrus aroma & citriol oil can be crushed out of it. The Lemon Myrtle can grow up to 6 metres or more, the flowers form in clusters at the end of the branches.

The prized Lemon Myrtle oil produced from the leaves are used medicinally & it is known to be a healing plant in Bush Medicine. It has strong antimicrobial properties, and is great as a natural insect repellent.

Being used more commercially in cleaning products & for flavouring our foods.

4. Native Raspberry (*rubus parifolius*)

This climbing Shrub/Bramble is found in light scrub & woodlands inland or alongside roads. It also grows close to beaches in Foreshore areas from St Kilda to Sorrento on Bunarong/Boon Wurrung land.

The leaves are bright green in colour with a slightly wrinkly look, with a distinctive silver/grey underside. It's narrow branches are covered in tiny hooked thorns to ward off pests.

Their flower emerges from tiny buds & are white/pale pink tinged in colour. When the flowers are

finished the beautiful ruby red raspberries appear & are ripe for eating. The berries don't look to dissimilar to your normal household variety of raspberries, differing in size as the Native Raspberries are smaller & a more round shape.

As Bush Tucker they have always been eaten raw as a sweet snack & are packed with vitamin A & vitamin C.

5. *Native Sea Parsley (apium prostratum)*

This is a close relative of European Parsley and adds a peppery zing to foods. As a coastal plant growing near the beach or in the sand, salt and composted seaweeds it carries a hint of salty, ocean to its flavour profile.

Extremely high in vitamin C it too was used as a cure for scurvy by early colonists. It is also very drought tolerant, wind tolerate, can grow in full sun to. The seeds can be harvested or you can pull out the entire root & it can be regrown inland or in pots. It can still grow in shade as well. So it is a resilient plant, despite its fragile appearance.

When it flowers small white clusters appear & it is the ideal time to take the seeds which follow this stage. It grows 30-50cm high and often spreads out about a metre in diameter. Bees and insects are attracted to the flowers & sweetness of the seeds.

It's completely edible, wonderful as a garnish, or add a few sprigs to pasta, soups, salads or you can blanche the stems to bring out a stronger flavour.

6. *Rounded Noon Flower (clavellatum)*

Round leaf Pigface as its commonly known has more rounded edges & shape in comparison to Karkalla (pigface) & grows along the coastline or inland in some areas.

It is a perennial succulent with a high water content & absorbs salt around it. Often you will find it along cliffs and the fringes of saltmarsh country.

When you see a red-light brown capsule appear at the tip of leaves that start to open at the top fruit is ready to consume. The flowers are a pink-purple with slim linear style petals. The flowers are around 3-4 cms in diameter & are known to open & close morning & night relying on sunlight/light. Flowers in Spring to Summer. You may see them starting to appear around Melbourne currently.

All parts of the Noon Flower are edible, including the leaves & flowers. The fruit is the size of small grapes pink-red in colour.

The leaves are fleshy, slightly salty, mild in flavour & are ideal in salads, as a vegetable or stir fried. Especially ideal to pickle & serve as a tangy accompaniment to meat. Also good as an ingredient in Chutney or Jam due to its gelatine like fluid content inside the leaves. The aloe vera like gel/moisture contained in the leaves are good to use applied to sunburn, bites & stings due to its water content and soothing properties.

Inland versions are often known as Ice plants & have less green appearance with it predominantly reddish brown look.

7. Pigface (*Karkalla*)

The fleshy, Succulent like Leaves are available all year round. With it's purple daisy like flowers appear in both Summer & Autumn with two main flourishes each year.

There are 6 types of Pigface which are Native to Australia. In and around Melbourne & in regional Victoria these are known. When the flowers have finished its fruit is ripe and it is ready to forage and be eaten.

Every part of this plant is edible & can be eaten raw or cooked. The fruit can be eaten on it's own or you can use it in jam or jellies. The leaves can also be used as vegetables or pickled or used in a stir fry or as a condiment or garnish. Very versatile & low maintenance to grow and varieties of it are found virtually Australia wide, with 30 introduced species found in the country as well.

The fruit taste like a salty fig, with a slight flavour of apple or strawberry, the inside of the fruit is similar to a dragon fruit and the fruit looks similar to a lobster claw. If you peel the fruit you will lose the salt taste & will be left with just the sweet inside of it.

8. Ruby Coastal Saltbush (*Rhagodia candolleana* Seaberry Saltbush)

This one grows from the Mallee country, to Gippsland and through to the Mornington Peninsula-known as Seaberry to the Bunurong people! It loves to follow the coastline along. It has small, slightly elongated slim leaves which are a vibrant shade of green (think lime green/sage coloured)the seed pods come out than erupt into plush, ruby red berries which are edible if you can acquire them before the birds do!

The berries have a bitter & sour tang. The colour used to be used in the 1920s as ink. The berries are also used as a watercolour paint or for steaming the colour into fabrics or paper.

This can be a small bush or can grow into a tree height up to 4-5 metres. Although the leaves are small you can also use them as a herby flavour in stuffing, sauces, marinades or cook them by boiling or blanching. Toss them in a stir fry to as a salty soy substitute. For a more subtle flavour dry & use as a salt substitute

9. Sea Rocket (*cahile endentula*)

Sea Rocket grows in Sandy soil close to the beach. It's succulent base stores water. This ones related to the Brassica & Cress families.

Its full of goodness; holding potassium, calcium, vitamin C, B vitamins, fibre & beta carotene. All parts of Sea Rocket are edible, the stalks, peppery leaves & mauve flowers. Thee taste of sea rocket is that of the mustard family and very strong, it can be used as a substitute for wasabi.

At the base of the plant it has a long tap root which stabilises the land surrounding it. The leaves are a deep green with the length being 4-7cm long. The leaves are characteristicly narrower on the lower part, the upper part of the leaves are remarkably wider.

The flowers can be white, lavender or pale pink. Near Rosebud the flowers are a lavender/mauve colour & the flowers have four petals which each petal being 4-8mm long. The have a pale yellow centre, Native bees love them too!

10. Warrigal Greens (*Tetragonia*)

Also known as Botany Bay greens, as they were sourced and eaten since early colonisation. Often used as a vegetable and as a cure for Scurvy due to its extremely high concentration of vitamin c and iron.

The leaves look similar to English spinach with a slightly more pointed angular shape to the leaves. It is like spinach, chard, silverbeet but contains oxalates. Warrigal Greens should be blanched or cooked to remove this.

Small yellow flowers appear in spring and summer, which are also edible, serving as a beautiful garnish in salads. The leaves have a furry vein like structure that is great for encasing salt in its leaves, taking on a salty flavour when grown along the Coast. When collected by the beach due to the added salt you don't need to add salt in your cooking, the greens will bring a saltiness & enhance the flavour. Enjoy it in pasta, as a pesto, stir fry it or blanch it. Pretty much its an indigenous version of spinach. In fact it also grows in New Zealand & native to that area. It is known as New Zealand Spinach. It grows profusely once established and can grow almost anywhere.

My Australia wide Top 10

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| 1. Bush Tomato | 6. Lilly Pilly |
| 2. Davidson Plum | 7. Saltbush |
| 3. Fingerlime | 8. Warrigal Greens |
| 4. Kakadu Plum | 9. Wattleseed |
| 5. Lemon myrtle | 10. Macadamias |



Your Green Prescription acknowledges the traditional custodians the Bunurong / Boon Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, the traditional owners of the land on which we are present. We pay our respects to elders past and present and acknowledge the sorrow of the stolen generations and the impact of colonization on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We recognize the resilience and pride of our communities.