PLANT FACT SHEET

Solanum aviculare Forster.f.

GENUS *Solanum* **FAMILY** Solanaceae

COMMON NAMES Kangaroo apple, Poroporo

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit

The fully ripe fruit is eaten raw or baked until the skin breaks open. They can be boiled, baked or stewed with sugar. They can be made into jam.
Caution: The chemicals could make this plant risky, especially with unripe fruit and for pregnant women.

DESCRIPTION

A shrub which keeps growing from year to year. It grows to 2-4 m tall and spreads to 5 m across. The stem is erect with spreading branches. The stems are purplish-green and angular. The leaves are dark green and 10-30 cm long and 1-12 cm wide. Normally the leaves are deeply divided into long tapering triangular segments. The leaf stalks are 3 cm long. The flowers are blue or purple and 3.5 cm across. They are 5 sided or star shaped with sharply pointed lobes. They develop in bunches in the axils of leaves and towards the ends of branches. The bunches can be 5-13 cm across. The fruit are egg shaped berries. They are orange, red or yellow and 2.5 cm long. There are several seeds inside the soft pulp.

HABITAT

A warm and cool temperate plant. It is drought and frost resistant. It will grow on most soils. It is more common near the edges of rainforests. It suits hardiness zones 9-11.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed or cuttings.

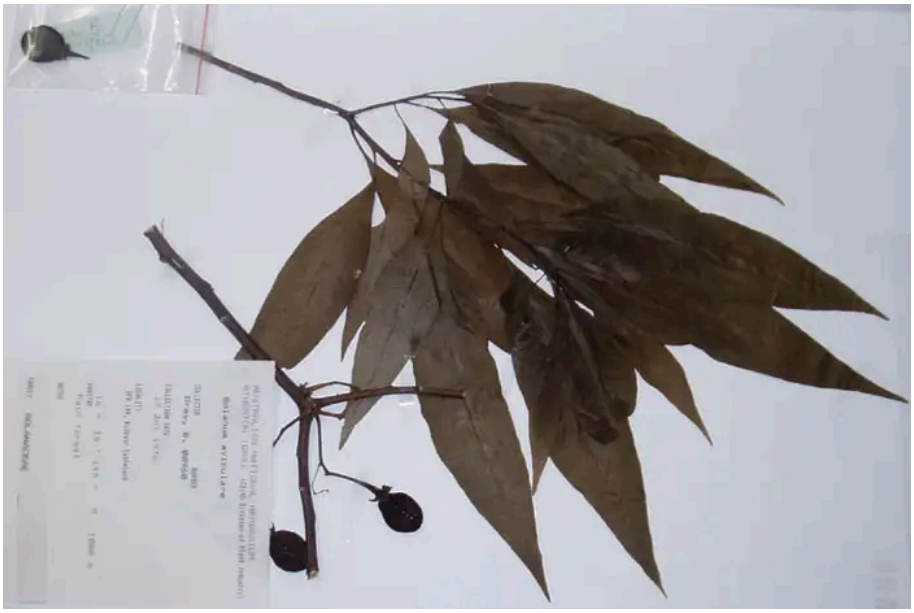
Harvesting and Seed Production

The fully mature fruit are collected after they drop from the plant. They have then lost their unpleasant acid taste.

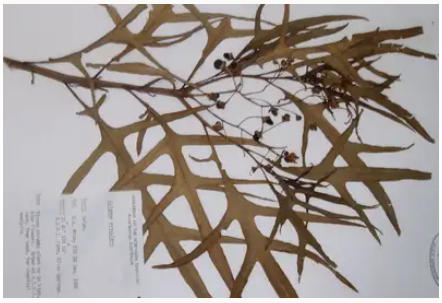
NOTES

Steroid drugs are collected from this plant. It is extensively cultivated in Russia. There are about 1400 Solanum species. Possibly not in Tasmania?.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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