

Members of the Saltbush Family in our district. Can you recognise them?

...Ros Gibson, with drawings by Ruth Hurst

The Saltbush family, *Chenopodiaceae*, is well represented in Australia, especially in harsh environments. Goose-foot shaped leaves are characteristic of many family member. This feature was the rationale for the family name *Chenopodiaceae*, derived from the Greek words for goose and foot. They have fire-retardant properties, because of saline moisture accumulated in their fleshy foliage.

***Rhagodia candolleana* subsp. *candolleana* Seaberry Saltbush**

Seaberry Saltbush is a hardy, dense, sprawling or scrambling shrub, common in a variety of coastal situations, including dunes, coastal cliffs, woodlands and salt marshes. It grows usually to about 1 m high, but sometimes, can be higher. Borne on ribbed branches, the succulent leaves are dark, glossy green on the upper surface, and dull and pale underneath. They are variable in size and shape, being oval, or rounded or triangular. Clusters of small, whitish-green flowers, in terminal, pyramidal, branched racemes, bloom in summer. The small, burgundy, berry-like fruit is flattened and fleshy.



Seaberry Saltbush

***Enchylaena tomentosa* var. *tomentosa*
Ruby Saltbush**

This sprawling, scrambling, low-growing shrub is found along the coast. The stalkless, bluish-green leaves are small and succulent, being either narrowly cylindrical, or tapering gradually from the middle towards each end. They are usually covered with short, fine, white to rust-coloured hairs. Tiny, insignificant, greenish flowers appear singly along the stems in spring and early summer, and are followed by flattened, round, fleshy, green fruit that change colour to yellow or ruby-red.



Ruby Saltbush

***Threlkeldia diffusa* Coast Bonefruit**

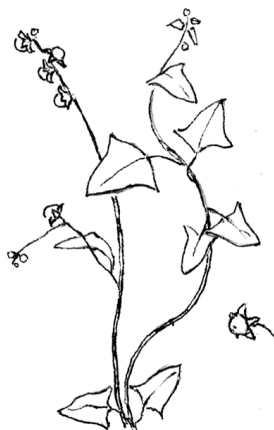
Coast Bonefruit is a succulent, spreading, pale green, perennial herb of the coastal cliffs, secondary dunes and the margins of tidal salt marshes. It often scrambles over taller vegetation. The narrow, nearly cylindrical, hairless, fleshy leaves turn reddish in autumn. Tiny, tubular, inconspicuous, green flowers appear singly in the leaf axils during winter and spring. The purplish fruit is small, oval and succulent. The seeds are very hard, giving rise to the common name Bonefruit.



Coast Bonefruit

***Einadia nutans* subsp. *nutans* Nodding Saltbush**

Nodding Saltbush grows in dry areas. It is a sprawling, ground-hugging, wiry, perennial herb with masses of triangular-shaped, grey-green, semi-succulent leaves of varying size. Slender branched terminal spikes of tiny, insignificant flowers appear in summer and are followed by small soft fleshy bright red fruit.



Nodding Saltbush

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