



photo: C. Miller



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Einadia nutans

Einadia nutans (syn. *Rhagodia nutans* [4, 5]) is a perennial, prostrate or twining herb with herbaceous or woody stems spreading to 1 m diameter, small pointed fleshy leaves, tiny yellow flowers and attractive bright red or yellow fruit most of the year [7, 11].

Common names are: Climbing Saltbush [9], Native Seaberry [11] and Nodding Saltbush [3].

Population map:

www.ala.org.au/explore/species-maps/

Natural Populations

Four forms of *Einadia nutans* occur; they are distinguished from each other by leaf shape and some fruiting characteristics [4]. Key to the species *E. nutans*:

- ***Einadia nutans* subsp. *eremaea*:** some leaves 20–30 mm long; stems robust and striate; Qld, NSW, S.A, WA, N.T. [6].
- ***Einadia nutans* subsp. *linifolia*:** leaves linear [6]. Herb with prostrate or twining herbaceous or woody stems, linear leaves, perennial rootstock. Flowers at any time throughout the year [8]. Probably bird dispersed [8]. Longevity 5 - 10 years [8]. Qld, NSW, Vic [6].
- ***Einadia nutans* subsp. *nutans*:** leaves usually less than 20 mm long; stems less robust [6]; woodland habitats. Flowers in autumn. Fruit in December -

March [7]. Seeds probably bird dispersed. Seeds reportedly eaten by Variegated Fairy-Wrens [7]. Qld, NSW, Vic, Tas, S.A. and N.T. [6].

- ***Einadia nutans* subsp. *oxycarpa*:** inflorescence with sterile spine-like branches; fruit ovoid, apex acute; mature perianth and leaves with scattered vesicular hairs [6]. Flowering: bisexual; stamens 2 or 3. NSW, SA [6].

E. nutans occurs in all states and territories [6]. It grows on a wide range of soil types and in most vegetation communities [4]. It is usually found growing along the ground, often around tree trunks, or on low shrubs, fences, or supported by tree trunks in a variety of soils and conditions [3].

Flowering and Seeds

E. nutans flowers mostly in summer – autumn, but some flowering occurs throughout the year [4].

The small succulent berry-like fruit becomes red and soft when ripe. Each fruit contains a single black seed. Collect by hand into plastic bags. The flesh can be left on the fruit, although, it should be thoroughly dried soon after collection to avoid becoming mouldy [1].

Cultivation and Uses

Seed germinates in 1-4 weeks, has high viability and doesn't require treatment [1, 2]. Seed has a medium seed-life. It is suitable for direct seeding [2].

E. nutans can also be grown from cuttings [3, 10, 12]. Longevity is up to 10 years [7].

Although generally ignored in cultivation, it makes a good ground cover when planted en masse, suitable for sloping banks, small areas between shrubs or large

expanses without trees or shrubs [5, 12]. It is extremely vigorous and hardy [12], able to withstand very dry conditions, frost, saline conditions or salt-laden winds [11].

E. nutans is a useful forage plant, which is relatively acceptable to stock [4].

These plants provide food for adult butterflies and their larvae, e.g. Saltbush Blue Butterfly [11].



To source seeds or plants:
www.grassywoodlands.org.au

References

- [1] Ralph, M. (1993). *Seed Collection of Australian Native Plants For Revegetation, Tree Planting and Direct Seeding*. 2nd ed. Fitzroy, Victoria: Bushland Horticulture.
- [2] Ralph, M. (1997). *Growing Australian Native Plants from Seed For Revegetation, Tree Planting and Direct Seeding*. Fitzroy, Victoria: Murray Ralph/Bushland Horticulture.
- [3] Walker, K., Burrows, G., and McMahon, L. (2001). *Bidgee Bush, An identification guide to common native plants species of the South Western Slopes of New South Wales*. Greening Australia, South West Slopes.
- [4] Cunningham, G.M., Mulham, W.E., Milthorpe, P.L. and Leigh, J.H. (1981). *Plants of Western New South Wales*. D. West: NSW Government Printing Office.
- [5] Wrigley J. F., and Fagg M. (1988). *Australian Native Plants. Propagation, cultivation and use in landscaping*. 3rd Ed. Australia: William Collins Publishers.

Internet links

- [6] PlantNET National Herbarium of New South Wales: <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=s&name=Einadia~nutans>
- [7] The Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust: http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/science/Evolutionary_Ecology_Research/Ecology_of_Cumberland_Plain_Woodland/woodland_plants/einadia_nutans_subsp._nutans
- [8] The Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust: http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/science/Evolutionary_Ecology_Research/Ecology_of_Cumberland_Plain_Woodland/woodland_plants/einadia_nutans_subsp_linifolia
- [9] FloraBase Western Australian Herbarium: <http://florabase.calm.wa.gov.au/browse/profile/11704>
- [10] Banyule City Council website: <http://www.banyule.vic.gov.au/Assets/Files/Propagation%20Notes%20for%20Schools.pdf>
- [11] Greening Australia Nursery, Queensland: http://www.qld.greeningaustralia.org.au/gaqotsasp/07_plant_search/features.asp?SpeciesName=Einadia%20nutans
- [12] Australian National Botanic Gardens & Australian National Herbarium, Harden Species List: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/greening-grainbelt/harden-species-list.xls>