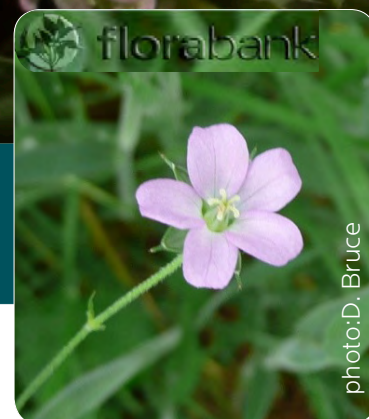


photo: G. Kruse



Geranium solanderi



Geranium solanderi is a trailing or scrambling perennial herb with a rounded to turnip-shaped taproot. It has short and long spreading and recurved hairs on stems [10]. The old leaves are orange-red [3]. It is commonly known as Austral Crane's-bill [10], Australian Cranesbill, Native Geranium, Cut-leaf Cranesbill and Hairy Geranium [2].

Population map:

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

Natural Populations

Geranium solanderi is found in NSW, Qld, Vic., Tas., SA, and WA [6]. It is widespread in woodlands [6, 11], seepage areas in moist to dryish grassy woodlands [6, 10], and riparian scrubs [11]. It is usually found as scattered plants or in small colonies in partially shaded locations but is seldom abundant [2]. It grows on a wide range of soils [2, 7, 9].

Two varieties of *Geranium solanderi* are recognised:

- ***G. solanderi* var. *solanderi*** - petals 5–8 mm long; sepals c. 5 mm long; fruit 12–15 mm long; taproot usually turnip-like [6].
- ***G. solanderi* var. *grande*** - petals 10–12 mm long; sepals 6–9 mm long; fruit 18–25 mm long; taproot swollen and branched but not turnip-like. All parts larger than the type variety [6].

Flowering and Seeds

Flowering occurs throughout the year but chiefly from August to December [1, 6, 7]. Flowers are usually pale pink colour and sometimes white [7, 9].

The black pitted seeds are dispersed when the fruit is ripe and the 5 hairy fruitlets curl upwards [1]. Seed collection is from late December to middle February. Monitor closely as seeds shed immediately or 1-2 days after mature [3]. Collect well-developed fruits, then allow to dry fully in a warm spot [4].

Cultivation and Uses

G. solanderi is grown from seed or cutting [1, 8]. Seed germinates readily once the seeds are treated with hot water at 60°C for 30 minutes [3, 5].

G. solanderi is a hardy species suitable for rockery or planting in pots [8]. It is best planted where there is space to fully develop and regenerate. It may become a problem in permanently moist soil [3] where it can spread quickly, developing roots at nodes along prostrate stems [1].

The large fleshy roots were roasted and eaten by indigenous people [8, 10, 11]. The roots contain nutritious starch although some contain tannin making them unpalatable [8], but

useful as a treatment for diarrhoea [11].

G. solanderi is probably grazed by stock, as it appears to be more prevalent in protected or relatively inaccessible sites [2, 3].

To source seeds or plants:

www.grassywoodlands.org.au



References

(a) Pictures under License from the Australian National Botanic Gardens.

[1] 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.

[2] 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.

[3] Stelling, F. (ed.) (1998). *South West Slopes Revegetation Guide*. Murray Catchment Management Committee, Albury, NSW.

[4] Ralph, M. (1993). *Seed Collection of Australian Native Plants For Revegetation, Tree Planting and Direct Seeding*. 2nd ed. Fitzroy, Victoria: Bushland Horticulture.

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Internet links

[6] PlantNET National Herbarium of New South Wales: <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=sp&name=Geranium~solanderi>

[7] FloraBase Western Australian Herbarium: <http://florabase.calm.wa.gov.au/browse/profile/4341>

[8] Australian National Botanical Gardens website: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/apu/plants/gerasola.html>

[9] Plant This website: <http://www.plantthis.com.au/plant-information.asp?gardener=15091>

[10] Yarra Ranges Local Plant Directory: http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Residents/Yarra_Ranges_Plant_Directory/Yarra_Ranges_Local_Plant_Directory/Lower_Storey/Herbs_and_Groundcovers_1m/Geranium_solanderi

[11] Victorian Flora: <http://www.victorianflora.wmcn.org.au/plantDetail.php?plantno=173.00000>