

Santalum acuminatum

SWEET QUANDONG

(R.Br.) A.DC.

Flowering period: November–March.

Description: Low-growing, erect, many branched, semi-parasitic shrub to 3 m high, often in thickets or occurring in diffuse clonal patches. Leaves 45–115 mm long, 5–14 mm wide, pasty green, soft, pliable and non-fibrous, often highly thickened almost succulent with age and pendulous or nearly so and often cool to the touch in summer. Flowers up to 50 in terminal, almost conical, heads producing usually only one large, green, ripening to bright red, spherical, edible fruit to 25 mm in diameter. Seed large, spherical, densely and intricately pitted and highly decorative.

Pollination: Usually by flies that are attracted to the musty odour of the flowers.

Distribution: Frequently found on stabilised secondary dunes usually emerging from heathland or as dense thickets mixed with *Acacia rostellifera*. The plant suckers from the extensive horizontal root system and often forms dense stands.

Propagation: From seeds by gently cracking the woody pericarp with a vice and sowing with a suitable host such as *Melaleuca systena*. Bury seed in pots so that the top of the pericarp is just exposed and keep moist. Seedlings emerge over a period of time. Carefully transfer to restoration sites avoiding excessive damage to the root system and water plants well at time of transplanting.

Uses in restoration: A noteworthy secondary dune species with its conspicuous and delicious red fruits ripening in late spring to early summer. Can be difficult to establish with high mortality recorded in some restoration programs.

Notes: There are many forms of the quandong and it is important that only local seed is used to retain the local genetic integrity of the plant. For example, all the Perth metropolitan coastal forms are strongly clonal with genetic evidence indicating strong localised genetic pools. A highly attractive and interesting plant for the home garden. Only available from specialised growers.



Habit



Flowers



Fruit



Distribution