

Enchylaena tomentosa BARRIER or RUBY SALTBUCH

R.Br.

Flowering period: May–September.

Description: Prostrate to erect succulent shrub, 20–60 cm high with alternate stalkless leaves, needle-like, 7–20 mm long and finely hairy. Flowers inconspicuous, yellow to greenish, solitary in the axils of the leaves, 1–1.5 mm wide and lacking petals. Fruit fleshy, flattened slightly, 3–5 mm in diameter, green, ripening orange or red and drying black.

Pollination: In coastal areas likely to be open pollinated by a variety of insects.

Distribution: Widespread and locally common along the Western Australian coast and inland particularly in the arid zone.

Propagation: Easily and effectively propagated from cuttings taken in spring or early summer. Seeds require cleaning of the fleshy covering by either careful rubbing or soaking in water for several days until natural fermentation processes soften the fruit after which the seeds can be cleaned by rubbing between cloth.

Uses in restoration: A useful species in restoration programs due to its ability to survive a variety of conditions from fully exposed to protected sites, rapid growth and outstanding ability to withstand drought. The fruit are likely to be a useful source of food for birds and some reptiles.

Notes: A highly decorative plant for the home garden where the species is highly drought tolerant, easily grown and under managed conditions will produce an abundance of variously coloured fruit over a long period. This is one of several coastal species that also occurs across inland Australia particularly in the arid zone. It is thought that the coastal habit 'pre-adapted' species like *Enchylaena* to migrate from coastal areas and colonise inland arid areas.



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Habit and fruit



Fruit



Habit



Distribution