

Gastrolobium capitatum

(Benth.) G.Chandler & Crisp

EGGS AND BACON

Flowering period: June–September.

Description: Low, multi-stemmed, sometimes prostrate shrub to 45 cm in coastal locations. Leaves distinctively opposite or alternate, narrow, rigid, usually flat but sometimes centrally folded, 5–9 cm long, 0.6–1 cm wide with fine reticulate veining. Flowers in clusters in the axil of the leaves, up to 1.5 cm across. Pod roughly ovoid with up to eight small dark brown seeds, 2–3 mm long, 1–2 mm wide and a small food body (aril) attached at one end that is thought to be important for improving ant-based dispersal of the seed.

Pollination: Open pollinated by a variety of native insects and introduced honeybees.

Distribution: Widespread from Eneabba to near Busselton. In coastal areas an uncommon species often found as solitary plants restricted to stable and wind protected secondary dunes where the species grows in low heathland with *Phyllanthus calycinus* and *Melaleuca systema*.

Propagation: Readily from seed after careful scarification of the seed. Sow directly into pots and transfer to rehabilitation sites when 4–5 cm tall. Addition of a small amount of habitat soil from under the parent plant to the potting mix will assist in inoculation by suitable soil *Rhizobium* bacteria that are essential in legume nitrogen fixation (ensure soil is weed and disease free).

Uses in restoration: Only for biodiversity enrichment planting into stabilised and wind-protected sites in secondary dune vegetation. Requires full sun situations and best grown with other similarly size species such as *Melaleuca systema*.

Notes: Useful species for the coastal garden producing decorative blooms in winter to early spring. Plant in full sun locations to ensure the species performs well. May be confused with *Gastrolobium nervosum*; however, this coastal eggs and bacon is distinctive with finer branches, less conspicuously reticulate veining and leaves in opposite pairs rather than in whorls of 3–4.



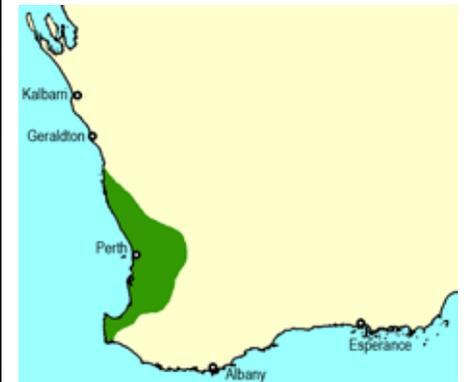
R. Barrett

Habit



E.P. Tay

Flowers



Distribution