

Nitraria billardieri

NITRE BUSH

DC.

Flowering period: August–November.

Description: Spreading shrub to 2 m high, often intricately branched. Leaves 10–29 mm long, 2.5–7 mm wide, somewhat fleshy to highly succulent depending on the level of salt exposure. Flowers 8 mm across with a few hairs at the apex of the petals. Seeds in a fleshy berry 10–20 mm long, 6–9 mm wide, purple, yellow or red, and edible.

Pollination: Open pollinated by a wide variety of insects.

Distribution: Widespread on off-shore islands in the Perth region, uncommon but more prevalent on limestone areas on the mainland. A common and very widespread species from Perth to Onslow and along the southern coast to Eucla.

Propagation: From cuttings taken from newly matured wood.

Uses in restoration: Not often used in restoration programs; however, an important species as the divaricate branching provides protection and nesting opportunities for birdlife and the berries are bird attracting.

Notes: The intricate branching may be linked to surviving high wind situations. Similar growth habits are found in many other species particularly in New Zealand where such intricate branching is referred to as a 'divaricating shrub'.



Habit



Fruit



Distribution