

*Leptomeria preissiana*

(Miq.) A. DC.

BUSH CHERRY

**Flowering period:** September–December (sometimes January).

**Description:** Bushy, erect shrub, 0.5–2 m high and found as solitary plants or in sparse thickets. Leaves absent or reduced to scale-like appendages on green, rounded and firm stems terminating in a blunt point. Flowers in axillary racemes up to 2 cm long with small globular flower buds that open to white, five-petaled flowers with conspicuous stamens. The seeds are red, fleshy, to 4 mm diameter and are sweet to taste. The species is a hemiparasite and thus requires nearby host plants, which are parasitised.

**Pollination:** Open pollinated by a wide variety of non-specific insects that collect nectar from the base of the petals.

**Distribution:** From Shark Bay to north of Bunbury (coastal form) and inland in drier regions of the eastern Wheatbelt and Eremaean zone south to the Great Western Woodlands where the species grows as solitary plants. Along the coast the species favours stable secondary dunes. Often an indicator of good-quality dunes as the species is vulnerable to disturbance.

**Propagation:** The seed is short-lived (cannot be stored for extended periods) and should be sown into a free-draining mix in autumn. Will require a host plant to support the seedling. Preferably use a legume species such as *Gastrolobium nervosum* or *Templetonia retusa* that provide additional nitrogen to the parasite.

**Uses in restoration:** Rarely used in restoration due to difficulties in obtaining plants from propagators.

**Notes:** The berry fruits of this species make it a highly desirable species for coastal berry-consuming birds. An attractive species when in full flower. The species was once more widespread and common in the Perth region but has declined due to habitat loss. A highly desirable species in restoration programs.



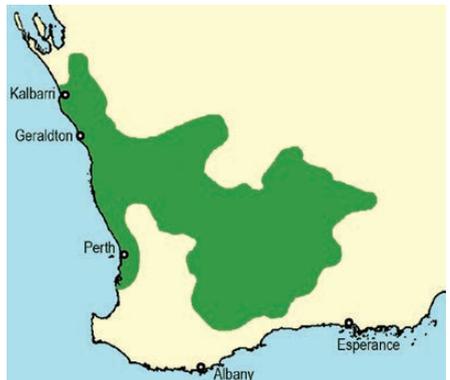
Habit



Flowers



Habit



Distribution