

Bloodroot



Scientific name: *Haemodorum spicatum*

Aboriginal name: Mardja (Noongar)



Plant habit



Plant



Flower



Root

About ...

The Bloodroot is related to the Kangaroo Paws and grows as scattered individuals or in small groups.

Three species of Bloodroots were eaten by local Noongar people.

The plant was called 'Bloodroot' because of the colour which oozes from the root when it is cut. The unusual chemicals that cause the reddish-orange colour are not found anywhere else in the plant kingdom. One of these chemicals is being researched by pharmaceutical companies due to its antibacterial and antitumour properties.

The flowers are 'Pollinated by native bees which are strong enough to push open the petals, diving head first into the flower to collect the pollen and copious nectar.' Bush Tucker Plants of the South-West.

Family

HAEMODORACEAE

Climate

Temperate

Habitat

Woodlands and heathlands of south western Australia

Form

Grass-like shrub
Height: 0.3 – 2 m

Foliage

Produces 2 – 3 round tough green leaves about 600 mm long each year
Long and slender
Turn black as they get older

Flower

Kambarang to Bunuru (Spring and Summer)
Flowering spike to 2 m
Black flowers
One flower spike per plant
Flowers never open
Fire stimulates flowering

Aboriginal Uses



- Has a red-coloured root system that is edible and is said to taste like pepper/chilli
- Eaten either raw or roasted; may be pounded and added to dishes to make them spicy
- Used to help with dysentery (diarrhoea)
- The reddish-orange colour in the roots were used as a dye

Developed by SERCUL for use with the *Bush Tucker Education Program*.



Used as food



Used as medicine



Used as resources



Local to SW WA

Caution: Do not prepare bush tucker food without having been shown by Indigenous or experienced persons. Some bush tucker if eaten in large quantities or not prepared correctly can cause illness.

SERCUL

South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare
www.sercul.org.au/our-projects/bushtucker/

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