

# African Boxthorn: *Lycium ferocissimum*

## Origin:

Native of South Africa.

## Form:

Shrub (commonly used as a hedge plant as it grows into an impenetrable thicket).

## Habitat:

Subhumid and semi-arid subtropical regions where it occurs on drier soils. It grows on all soil types.

## Description:

An erect perennial shrub up to 6m in height and 3m across. Characterised by woody, thorny growth with rigid, branched stems that can have spines up to 15cm long. The plant is drought resistant and during time of water stress can shed its leaves appearing dead, but can also be deciduous during winter. Trunk: light brown and smooth when young, turning darker brown or grey and becoming rough with age. Each branchlet terminating in a stout spine. Leaves: Smooth, fleshy; to 3.5cm long.

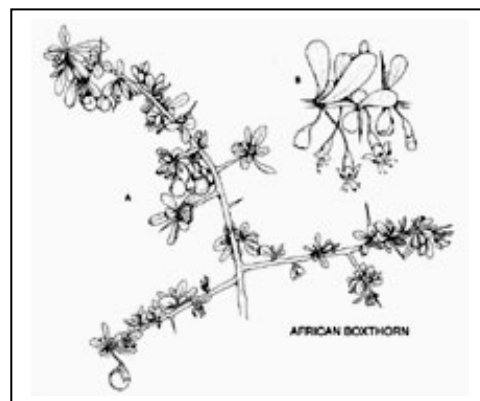


## Flowers/Seeds:

Flowers: Fragrant, 12mm in diameter and five waxy white petals with a purplish base. Occur at approximately 2 years; during summer, or any time moisture is available. Appear on slender stalks from the base of leaf clusters. Fruit: oblong berry approximately 10mm long. It ripens from a smooth green appearance to bright orange-red. It contains numerous small, oval, flattened seeds.

## Dispersal:

Seed eaten by animals and birds also dispersed through the transport of mud or soil on machinery. African boxthorn also has the ability to grow from root segments. Care must therefore be taken during manual removal to remove all sections of the root system.



## Weed identification and similar native species

One native and three weed boxthorns (*Lycium spp.*) occur in Australia. All are thorny shrubs which produce berries, with white or purple flowers and petals joined in a tube at the base.

The native species, Australian boxthorn (*Lycium australe*) grows across southern mainland Australia, mainly in drier areas west of the Great Dividing Range.