



INDIGENOUS GARDEN

Callistemon (Native Currant)

Indigenous Name
Ahokeye

Indigenous use

Known as Ahakeye to the Aboriginal people, it is favoured for its sweet taste and, as it can be reconstituted in water when dry, it is an invaluable desert food. Since the native currant is an important food source, it is a totem for many Aboriginal people and has a Dreaming story associated with it.

Description

This species grows small, around 2 to 3 metres in height. With its dark green, glossy leaves, it makes an attractive ornamental plant in the garden or in a pot. Wild Currant is a small tropical shrub native to north Queensland and New Guinea. Its berries are tart and cranberry-like when young, but develop into dark, sweet fruit as they mature. Studies indicate that the phytochemicals in the fruit have natural pesticide properties, and have been proven effective against Epilachna beetles.



Habitat

Wild Currant is a hardy plant that handles a range of soil types and will weather light frosts and winds – however its ideal growing conditions are rich, fertile soil and warm, sunny climates.