



Davidson and Illawarra plums

Miscellaneous native food crops

Introduction

Along with the 'major' native food crops, such as quandong, native citrus, muntries and wattleseed – which are covered by individual fact sheets - there are a number of other native food plants with potential for increased production in South Australia.

Two tree crops with 'plum-like' fruits are described in this publication – Davidson Plum and Illawarra Plum.

Illawarra plum (*Podocarpus elatus*)

Description

Evergreen, upright conical to spreading tree of variable height (5 to 35 m). Foliage is dark glossy green, new growth is an attractive lime green. Male flowers (catkins) and female flowers carried on separate trees. Blue-black (plum like) fruits (20 to 30 mm) are carried on female trees, have a waxy bloom, and conveniently carry a large seed attached to the "outside" of the flesh at the opposite end to the stem. Fruit ripens in Autumn to Winter.

Illawarra Plum occurs naturally in 800 to 1,500 mm rainfall areas of temperate to sub-tropical eastern NSW and Qld, on a broad range of soils.

Fruit has a subtle plum/pine flavour, and may be used for savoury applications (eg. 'plum' and chilli sauces), for chutneys, jams, pies, desserts etc.

Production

A member of the conifer family. Despite its large size in nature, it tends to be 5 to 10 m high under cultivation. Size may be contained by pruning or hedging. Requires male (pollinator) and female trees, at a ratio of say 1 pollinator to 10. Early, mid and late season varieties exist. Biennial bearing can be a problem with inferior selections. Tolerant of moderately alkaline soils and moderate frosts. Due to the inherent genetic variability of seedlings, clonally propagated plants of superior selections should be used.



Fig 1. Illawarra plum fruit

Davidson Plum (*Davidsonia pruriens*)

Description

The Davidson Plum is known as one of the best of the native 'plums'. It ripens in summer and autumn, is dark in colour and has a soft, juicy pulp with a sharp acidity. It is produced on a small, slender tree with large frond-like leaves that bear irritating hairs.

Davidson Plum occurs naturally in rainforest areas in northern NSW and Qld and prefers a friable soil, high in organic matter.

The fruit makes excellent jams and sauces and is used by processors and restaurants.

Production

Some plantings of Davidson Plum have occurred in Eastern States. In cultivation Davidson Plum requires shelter from hot, cold and dry winds. Adequate water is required for tree growth, flowering, fruit set and fruit growth. Yields may be variable from season to season.

Potential returns

While these crops may have potential in selected areas in South Australia, it is too early to estimate the potential yields and production costs for these species under cultivation.

Further information

Further information on native crops is contained in the other publications in this series:

Australian Native Citrus – Wild Species, Cultivars and Hybrids

Bush Tomato Production

Miscellaneous Native Food Crops – Davidson and Illawarra Plums

Miscellaneous Native Food Crops – East Coast Tree Species with Potential in SA

Miscellaneous Native Food Crops – Herbs and Vegetables with Potential in SA

Mountain Pepper Production

Muntries Production

Native Food Background Notes

Native Food Crops – Frequently Asked Questions

Native Food Crops – Sources of Information

Quandong Production

Sunrise Lime Dieback

The Native Food Industry in SA

Wattleseed Production

These fact sheets are also available for download from the Australian Native Produce Industries website at www.anpi.com.au



Fig 2 Davidson plum fruit

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