

# South Australian natives for screening and hedging

If you are looking for easy-care plants that are well adapted to local conditions, then natives are a great way to go, and with over three thousand plants native to South Australia there is bound to be some great options to suit your particular needs.

Gardening with plants that belong (in every sense of the word) also helps us connect to the places we live and work. The very act of planting, tending and watching plants grow and interact with insects and birds draws us into relationship with the local ecology in simple but satisfying ways.

Clipped natives is an emerging style of gardening that deserves greater attention. Native shrubs with naturally dense growth habits lend themselves well to this style of gardening and have the potential to expand the definition of what a native garden can be.

The following horticultural notes provide the low-down on a selection of our favourite South Australian natives that are ideally suited for screening and hedging.



Examples of screening (left) and hedging (right) with native plants

# Emu Bush

## *Eremophila glabra*

### Scrophulariaceae



#### **Etymology**

Greek, *eremos*; desert and *phileo*; to love, i.e. “desert loving”, referring to the preferred habitat of many species in this genus, *glabra* from Latin, *glaber*; meaning smooth or hairless (though there are some exceptional varieties within the species). Part of a large genus with over 60 species in South Australia and over 200 species across Australia. Many Western Australian *Eremophila* are popular in cultivation such as *Eremophila racemosa*. If you are at all curious about *Eremophila* check out Bob Chinook’s book ‘*Eremophila and allied genera*’.

#### **Natural distribution**

Found throughout inland parts of Australia and most other states.

#### **Description**

Alternate lanceolate leaves about 1 cm wide. The growth habit is highly variable species with some plants displaying a completely prostrate form (e.g. ‘Roseworthy’) and some sporting a silvery foliage (e.g. ‘Murchison River’ Western Australia). *Eremophila glabra* ‘Ceduna’ is a variety that, forms a compact shrub to 1 m in height. Flower dark orange/red flowers most of the year.

#### **Horticulture**

Prefers well-drained soils. Responds enthusiastically to pruning. Can be formed into domed individual shrubs or low hedges. The flowers are attractive both insect and birds and are a favourite of native honeyeaters.

#### **Similar plants**

Many Western Australian species are popular in cultivation including *Eremophila racemosa* e.g. Nineteenth St, Gawler South.

# Sticky Boobialla

## *Myoporum petiolatum*

### Scrophulariaceae



#### **Etymology**

Ancient Greek *myo* meaning to shut and *poros* meaning pore — referring to the glands on the leaves of many species in the genus.

#### **Natural distribution**

Native to hills and gullies of the MLR, Flinders Ranges, KI and the SE.

#### **Description**

Broad, glossy green leaves, white flowers (Spring and Summer), fast growing to a height and width of 1.5 m.

#### **Horticulture**

Prefers well-drained soils. Prune to form domed individual shrubs or arrange in rows to form a screen. Regular tip pruning and irrigation ensure the maintenance of a lush green canopy.

#### **Similar plants**

*Myoporum viscosum* (also called Sticky Boobialla) — coastal Yorke Peninsula and Eyre Peninsula with sessile leaves.

*Myoporum montanum* (Water-bush) — another similar species, occurs throughout the region into arid parts of the state and beyond. (Planted at the SA Water Port Pire Depot Native Garden).



# Smooth Correa

## *Correa glabra* var. *turnbullii*

### Rutaceae



#### Etymology

Correa was named in honour of botanist Jose Francisco Correa de Serra (1751-1823), and *glabra* comes from Latin meaning smooth or without hairs.

#### Natural distribution

This endemic South Australian subspecies occurs from Mount Lofty to the mallee scrub and the southern Flinders Ranges.

#### Description

A compact shrub with dark green glossy leaves that have a fruity scent when crushed. Flowers are crimson flowers grading to pale green petal tips. This variety differ from the other forms of the same species by having red, rather than green or yellow flowers. Flowering between May and August. Grows to height and width of 1 m.

#### Horticulture

Prefers well-drained soils. Is very hardy once established. Tip prune to a domed shrubs or can form low hedges if planted in rows (e.g. 700 mm spacing). The flowers are attractive to both insect and birds and are a favourite of native honeyeaters.

# Fragrant Saltbush

## *Rhagodia parabolica*

### Amaranthaceae



#### Etymology

Greek *rhagodes*: bearing berries

#### Natural distribution

Occurs naturally throughout South Australia and in many other states around Australia, often on calcareous soils.

#### Description

Pale blue-grey leaves are 1.5 – 4 cm long and subtly fragrant. Panicles of tiny green flowers forms bright red berries (flowers all year round depending on conditions). Forms a dense shrub to 1 - 1.5 m tall and wide (though can be held smaller with pruning).

#### Horticulture

A versatile plant that tolerates most well drained soil-types including alkaline soils. Prefers a full sun position or light shade and is very heat tolerant – the leaves have a fine powdery coating which probably acts like a sunscreen.

Responds well to regular tip pruning. Great for informal screening or hedging when planted densely. Offers a strong foliage colour contrast set against other green foliage shrubs. Attractive to many native insects including butterflies and the berries are attractive to small native birds.

#### Similar plants

*Rhagodia spinescens*

Similar in appearance to other large grey saltbushes in the *Atriplex* genus – such as *Atriplex cinerea* (Coastal Saltbush) and *Atriplex nummularia* (Old Man Salt Bush). *Rhagodia* are naturally more compact and easier to train than these. A compact selection of *R. parabolica* from NSW is marketed as 'Grey Edge'.

# Spiny Saltbush

## *Rhagodia spinescens*

### Amaranthaceae



#### Etymology

Greek *rhagodes*: bearing berries

#### Natural distribution

Occurs naturally throughout South Australia and in many other states around Australia, often on calcareous soils.

#### Description

Pale silvery grey-green leaves 5 – 10 mm long, almost round. Divaricate branches, the older branches often ending in a spine. Forms a dense shrub to 1.5 m tall and wide (though can be held smaller with pruning). Panicles of tiny green flowers forms bright red berries (flowers all year round depending on conditions).

#### Horticulture

A versatile plant that tolerates most well drained soil types including alkaline soils and coastal sites. Prefers a full sun or light shade position and is very heat tolerant – the leaves have fine powder coating which probably acts like a sunscreen.

Responds well to regular tip pruning. Great for informal screening or hedging when planted densely. Offers a strong foliage colour contrast set against other green foliage shrubs. Attractive to many native insects including butterflies and the berries are attractive to small native birds. The dense foliage is also good habitat for small skinks and small birds.

#### Similar plants

*Rhagodia parabolica*

Similar in appearance to other large grey saltbushes in the *Atriplex* genus – such as *A. cinerea* (Coastal Saltbush) and *A. nummularia* (Old Man Salt Bush). *Rhagodia* are naturally more compact and easier to train. An interstate selection of *R. spinescens* is marked as Silver Border and a particularly low-growing (0.5 m) selection of is marketed as Aussie Flat Bush™ SAB01 PBR.



# Other great SA native for screening and hedging



## Shore Westringia

*Westringia dampieri*

A tough coastal South Australian native used successfully as a low hedge. The most common cultivars of *Westringia* are *W. fruticosa* which is native to New South Wales.



## Paper-flower

*Thomasia petalocalyx*

A naturally domed shrub to 0.8 m tall and wide useful for screening with delicate pink paper-like flowers. Long-lived and easy to maintain.



## Peep hill Hopbush

*Dodonaea subglandulifera*

South Australian endemic (endangered). An erect shrub to 2 m tall found in mallee woodlands often on limestone soils. Dense canopy of fine glossy leaves, female plants have a bright display of maroon hops.

## For more information please contact



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