

Medicinal Plant Images

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Figure 1. *Scaevola spinescens* (commonly known as currant bush, maroon bush and prickly fanflower) is an endemic Australian plant which is distributed in arid areas of the Australian continent, particularly in the western regions. Australian Aborigines used *S. spinescens* as a medicinal plant to treat a wide variety of conditions.^[1,2] An infusion of the roots was used to treat stomach pain and urinary disorders. A decoction of the stem was used to treat boils, rashes and skin disorders. Fumes from the whole plant were inhaled to treat viral disorders including colds and influenza. A recent study demonstrated the general inhibitory activity of *S. spinescens* extracts against RNA viruses using an MS2 phage model system, partially verifying the ethnobotanical usages.^[2] Earlier studies have also reported the ability of *S. spinescens* extracts to inhibit more than 25% of human cytomegalovirus (CMV) late antigen production.^[3] *S. spinescens* also had traditional uses in the treatment of various cancers.^[4,5] Whilst the isolated compounds anticancer activity has yet to be confirmed, studies have indicated that *S. spinescens* taraxerene pentacyclic triterpenoids may be responsible for this anticancer activity.^[6] Photograph was taken by Jeanie Crago of Outback Books and is reproduced here with the authors permission.



Figure 2. *Terminalia ferdinandiana* (commonly known as Kakadu plum, gubinge, billy goat plum and salty plum) is an endemic Australian tree which occurs in tropical grassland regions of northern Australia. The fruit has traditional uses for indigenous Australians as food and as a medicinal plant.^[1] Recent studies have reported Kakadu plum to be extremely high in antioxidants and to be the richest naturally occurring source of vitamin C.^[8,9] As high antioxidant levels have previously been demonstrated to act as preventative effects against the development of degenerative chronic diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular diseases, neural degeneration, diabetes and obesity, it has been postulated that Kakadu plum fruit may also be an effective preventative against these diseases.^[7] Recent studies have shown Kakadu plum fruit extracts to be effective at inhibiting the growth of a panel of microbes.^[10] Photograph taken in Brisbane Australia by Dr Ian Cock in 2011.

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