

Peppy Plants May 2012

by Eleanor Bennett

The common plant that we see along the strand line, **Cakile maritima* commonly known as Sea Rocket, is a native of North Africa and temperate Europe (see also [Cakile maritima](#)). It is thought to have been introduced to Australia in ship's ballast, as all the early collections are from near ports. The first collection recorded for Western Australia was from North Fremantle in 1897. It is now recorded from Dirk Hartog Island, across southern Australia into southern Queensland and Tasmania.

Cakile is from the Arabic quqilleh, believed to be the name of the plant and **maritima** from the Latin meaning growing by the sea.

**Cakile maritima* is a ground hugging annual, with fleshy leaves. The inflorescence elongates during flowering so young fruits may be observed on the lower section and flowers on the upper section. The flowers are pink to mauve with 4 petals and 6 stamens. The fruits are fleshy when young becoming corky with age and separating into 2, single seeded segments.



This indicates its common location along the strand line.



The 4 petals are obvious in these 2 flowers positioned at the tip of the inflorescence.



This photograph of a young plant illustrates its prostrate habit and fleshy leaves.



These are the fleshy young fruits with the 2 sections obvious. The lower section has horn-like tips (outlined in black) and the upper section is elongated (outlined in red).