

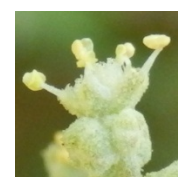
Peppy Plants March 2013

by Eleanor Bennett

This month the Berry Saltbush, *Rhagodia baccata*, will be featured as the plants are now in flower (see also [Rhagodia baccata](#)). The genus *Rhagodia* comes from the Greek **rhagodes**, meaning resembling berries or grapes; and *baccata* from the Latin **bacca** meaning having fleshy, pulpy berries. The Berry Saltbush is a shrub that reaches up to 4m particularly where it has another shrub close by to give it support, with the male and female flowers occurring on separate plants. It has thick, opposite leaves which have no hairs on the upper surface but white, dry bladderly hairs on the lower surface. The inflorescence is large and branched with small clusters of white to cream and very small flowers. The flowers have a calyx which is white to cream from the bladderly hairs but no petals. The male flowers have 5 stamens and the female flowers have an ovary with 2 stigmas. The fruiting calyx is thin, which is exceeded by the red berry. Berry Saltbush occurs in near coastal areas and extends from Geraldton to Cape Arid. It is common in the coastal heath at Peppermint Grove Beach.



Densely flowered shrub



The large, branched inflorescence has the flowers occurring in small clusters. Below the picture of the inflorescence is a group of female flowers on the left and a male flower on the right.



The stems are prominently ribbed



The fruits are globular, flattened on the upper surface, succulent and leave a red mark when squashed. A plant which is densely fruiting is spectacular.



These young leaves illustrate the dry bladderly hairs which only occur on the lower surface in the mature leaf.