

# Peppy Plants February 2012

by Eleanor Bennett

In January there are several endemic (native to the area) plants still in flower. One which is just commencing to flower is **Quandong** (*Santalum acuminatum*) (see also [Santalum acuminatum](#)). The botanical names of plants are Latinised and generally have a specific meaning or are named after someone. *Santalum* is derived from the Arabic *sandal*, the Indian Sandalwood; and *acuminatum* from the Latin for a sharpened point referring the sharp tip to the leaves.

At Peppy *Santalum acuminatum* is a shrub about 1.5m tall. It is hemi-parasitic which means it produces its own food but uses the roots of other plants (the host) to obtain nutrients, but does not kill the host plant. At Peppy, the host is typically a Wattle plant, which it attaches to by pad-like suckers that encircle the host's roots.



This illustrates the yellow-green colour of the leaves, a typical colour for hemiparasitic plants. The leaves arise opposite each other which is visible on the left hand side of the picture, and the next set of opposite leaves is at right angles to this one. The leaves are leathery to the touch.

Also visible is the much-branched inflorescence which can be seen to consist of many very small flowers. The flowers are 2-3mm across and fragrant when many are in flower. The flowers are 4-lobed and do not have a distinct calyx and petals like other flowers.



Each flower is a greenish colour outside and reddish colour inside. They are very shortly stalked.



In October and November the characteristic bright red fruits are visible. From the many small flowers seen in the inflorescence, only 1 or 2 fruits will develop.

The fruits are edible but remember it is illegal to collect native plants unless you have a licence.

