

focus on

# RIBERRY

*Syzygium luehmannii*



RURAL  
INDUSTRIES

Research & Development  
Corporation

Part of an R&D program managed by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation

## Overview

Riberry is a pear-shaped fruit, 12-15 millimetres in length, with a striking red/ cerise colour that fades to pink when cooked.

It is native to sub-tropical areas of Queensland and New South Wales. Wild harvest has been replaced by cultivation, with several plantations on the north coast of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

There are historic references from New South Wales and Queensland about riberry being regularly eaten raw as a snack by Aboriginal communities, and suggestions the pulp was also applied to sore ears.

The lilly pilly, as it's also known, was one of the first edible plants to be noted during Captain Cook's visit to Australia in 1770. It's also reported to be one of the first fruits consumed as jam or cordials by early colonists of Australia.

Riberry is strongly clove and spice flavoured and makes an excellent processing and culinary fruit.

The fruit can be eaten straight from the tree, but is not generally consumed fresh. It is used in both sweet and savoury products including jams, preserves, chutney, relishes, ice cream, yoghurt, chocolates, cakes and sauces for meat dishes.

Riberry has high levels of folate and antioxidants. Ribberries are also a very good source of calcium.



Ribberries

Riberry is a medium-sized to large tree which is found in sub-tropical areas with more than 600 millimetres of annual rainfall close to the coast, from Kempsey on the north coast of New South Wales to the Sunshine Coast in Queensland.

## Growing conditions

Riberry production is somewhat variable and dependent on seasonal growing conditions. Wild harvest was initially the main method of production, but is now used mainly to supplement plantations in low yield years.

Cultivation has extended the range of the tree through areas on the north coast of New South Wales and into Victoria and South Australia.

Riberry can tolerate quite low temperatures in winter and mild frost. High summer temperatures while the tree is flowering and particularly fruiting can be a problem due to the potential of sunburn if there is not adequate moisture.

Several selections and hybrids have been made from naturally occurring or seed-grown planted trees, on various qualities such as "seedlessness", size of fruit and flavour. Some value-adding processes require none or very small amounts of seed while for others, having seed is not a problem.

Riberry is in supply and demand balance for the small volume, high value markets that growers and opportunistic wild harvesters are able to supply. Total annual production is estimated at 4-5 tonnes.

## Harvesting

On the east coast of Australia, riberry produces fruit from late November to mid-January, while further south the harvest continues later into February. *continues overleaf*



Ribberies

(from previous) The fruit is generally picked by hand into bags or containers, although successful trials have run with nets placed under trees to catch falling fruit.

Riberry needs to be picked daily and, due to its short shelf life when fresh, washed, graded and frozen immediately. Better quality fruit makes up around 60 per cent of harvest, which is frozen whole. The remainder is usually processed into a frozen pulp and directed toward manufacturers.

Currently all processed product is sold within Australia but potential exists on the export market.

Riberry is harvested throughout summer and needs to be refrigerated or frozen as soon as possible. The fruit will keep in the refrigerator for 2-3 weeks and frozen for up to two years.

Riberry comes from the same family as cloves, and has a refreshingly tart, spicy flavour that has a hint of cloves and cinnamon. Fruit can vary in taste depending on selection.

Its rich flavour lends itself well for value-added products such as sauces, chutneys and jams which work well with game meats such as kangaroo as well as poultry, lamb and pork.

The fruit can also be used in salads, vegetable dishes and desserts such as ice cream, yoghurt and cakes. Its aromatic flavour tends to complement soft cheeses such as brie. Riberry can also be infused into spirits such as vodka to produce a cinnamon-like flavour.

## Health benefits

Riberry contains high levels of anthocyanins. These plant pigments are responsible for the red, purple and blue colours of fruits and vegetables and are an increasingly important group of natural food colourants.

They are also potent antioxidants, and riberry is one of the native species with superior antioxidant capacity when compared with blueberry, which is renowned worldwide as the 'health-promoting fruit'.

Antioxidants are believed to hold a number of health benefits for human health, potentially preventing or delaying diseases such as Alzheimer's disease, autoimmune and cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes.

Riberry samples have also exhibited high levels of folate, otherwise known as vitamin B-9.

Vitamin B-9 is needed for healthy growth and development and is also essential for the healthy development of babies during early pregnancy.

It is also a very good source of calcium among other fruits and vegetables.

## FLAVOUR PROFILE

“...A sweet, **spiced tea aroma** with musk, bush honey and resinous notes. The fruit has a **refreshingly tart, spicy flavour** that has a hint of cloves and cinnamon

## NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

	(per 100 grams leaf, dried, ground)		(per 100 grams dry weight)
Energy	629 Kj	Zinc (Zn)	1.440 mg
H <sub>2</sub> O	-	Magnesium (Mg)	247.4 mg
Protein	8.1 g	Calcium (ca)	261.45 mg
Total fat	0.0	Iron (Fe)	5.86 mg
Total saturated fatty acids	0.0	Selenium (Se)	0.0
Carbohydrates	3.6 g	Phosphorus (P)	100.6 mg
Sugar (total)	3.6 g	Sodium (Na)	51.75 mg
Fibre	-	Potassium (K)	773.3 mg
		Manganese (Mn)	9.595 mg
		Copper (Cu)	0.367 mg
		Molybdenum (Mo)	2.6 g
		K : Na	14.9



Riberries

## GROWING REGIONS



Source: [www.farmdiversity.com.au](http://www.farmdiversity.com.au)



## For more information

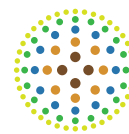
This fact sheet is one of a series summarising Native Foods R&D from 2007 to 2012. In a partnership between government and industry, the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) and Australian Native Food Industry Limited (ANFIL) are working towards an innovative, profitable and sustainable Native Foods industry.



Australian Native Food Industry Limited (ANFIL) was formed in 2006 and is the peak national body which represents all interests in the rapidly growing Australian native food industry. ANFIL has taken the lead in working with industry, governments and other organisations to determine and prioritise research and market development strategies to progress the industry.

web: [www.anfil.org.au](http://www.anfil.org.au)  
email: [info@anfil.org.au](mailto:info@anfil.org.au)

Australian Native Food Industry Ltd  
3866 Channel Highway  
Woodbridge Tasmania 7162  
Australia



**RURAL INDUSTRIES**  
Research & Development Corporation

The Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation (RIRDC) is a statutory authority established to work with industry to invest in research and development for a more profitable, sustainable and dynamic rural sector.

Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation  
Phone: 02 6271 4100  
email: [rirdc@rirdc.gov.au](mailto:rirdc@rirdc.gov.au)  
web: [www.rirdc.gov.au](http://www.rirdc.gov.au)

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