



Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula Inc

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Plant of the month: *Boobialla Myoporum insulare*



Boobialla Myoporum insulare is a stout, rounded large shrub or small tree to 6m x 3m, common on the dunes and cliffs along the coast and short distances inland. On the coast at Venus Bay the leaves are thick or fleshy, lanceolate to broadly elliptic, 3-9 cm long x 10-22 mm wide, usually with toothed margins towards the tip. Clusters of small (5-10 mm) scented white flowers with purple spots in the throat occur in the leaf axils from September to December. The edible drupe (a stone fruit with a single seed) is bluish purple and about 8 mm in diameter. As it ages the bark develops attractive tessellations or coarse fissures.

Boobialla is a hardy salt and lime tolerant plant, which is relatively fire resistant, making it ideal for coastal screening and windbreaks. It can tolerate most soils and is usually propagated from cuttings of firm young growth which can strike successfully by simply placing the branchlets directly into the soil. It responds well to regular pruning to maintain shape and can be hedged. Birds are partial to the fruit and the dense habit of *Boobialla* provides refuge for small birds.

Boobialla belongs to the Scrophulariaceae (syn. Myoporaceae) family. The genus name *Myoporum* comes from the Greek, 'myo' meaning shut and 'poros' meaning a pore, referring to the glands on the leaf. There are seven species of *Myoporum* in Victoria. The species name *insulare* comes from the Latin 'insula', meaning island and relating to the habitat in which *Boobialla* is found, i.e. islands or more generally coastal regions.

For further information please visit FVBP website above. Photo: Lorraine Norden.