



## Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula Inc

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### Plant of the month: Native Raspberry *Rubus parvifolius*



Native Raspberry or Small-leaf Bramble *Rubus parvifolius* is a scrambling, prickly shrub with densely hairy young branches and canes growing to 2 metres long with hooked thorns. The bright green leaves are divided (pinnate), with 3-5 ovate leaflets 1-4 cm x 1-3.5 cm, the terminal leaflet is the longest. The leaves are wrinkled and toothed or deeply lobed with a soft velvety feel below. Pink flowers occur in terminal sprays or singly in the leaf axils from October to February, followed until April by the edible red berries 10-12 mm across.

Native Raspberry is a common indigenous shrub at Venus Bay and a hardy trailer for the garden, providing excellent cover and a food source for small insectivorous birds and other wildlife. It tends to root where the canes touch the ground and may spread in this way. If this is a problem it can be pruned or trained as a climber. It prefers well drained soil and full to part shade. Medicinal tea produced from the leaves was used to treat diarrhoea. Propagation is from tip cuttings and root fragments.

The Rosaceae or Rose family contains many important species producing edible fruit, such as apples, pears, plums and other stone fruit and berries. The genus name *Rubus* is the Latin name for blackberry; 'ruber' meaning red and referring to the unripe blackberry fruit. European blackberry is a noxious weed and can be distinguished from Native Raspberry with its darker leaves in a finger-like (palmate) arrangement. The species name *parvifolius* means small leaved, 'parvus' being Latin for small. For further information please visit FVBP website above. Photo: Lorraine Norden.