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Plant of the month: Marsh Saltbush *Atriplex paludosa*



Marsh Saltbush *Atriplex paludosa* subsp. *paludosa* is a sprawling shrub, growing to 1.6 metres tall. The leaves are green and smooth on the upper surface and densely mealy and whitish below, growing up to 40 mm long x 8 mm wide. It is mainly dioecious with male flowers in dense clusters (photo) and female flowers few in upper leaf axils or terminal spikes to 15 cm long. Flowers and fruit occur at most times of year. There are four subspecies of *Atriplex paludosa* but only one found in Victoria. Although locally common along the fringe of the coastal saltmarsh on Anderson Inlet, Marsh Saltbush is classed as rare in Victoria. It is also found from Western Australia to New South Wales.

Marsh Saltbush grows in full sun, is fire-resistant, drought and salt tolerant and excellent for soil erosion control. Aborigines ground and cooked the seed. Propagation is from seed or cuttings.

Atriplex belongs in the *Chenopodiaceae* or Saltbush family and the genus name comes from the Latin *Atriplexum*, meaning saltbush. The species name *paludosa* means 'of the swamps'.

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

