



Davidson Plum

ID # 179



The fruits, while edible, are not particularly palatable, however, they make excellent jams and a full-flavoured, dry red wine. The fruit is high in antioxidant activity.

Interesting fact

John Ewan Davison was a colonist sugar planter and miller in Queensland with a questionable past of taking advantage of indigenous people and their artifacts.



In Mackay in 1867 at a jointly owned cotton and sugar plantation where he investigated new varieties of sugar cane and methods of production, he also discovered and recorded this species of plum tree.

Family: *Cunoniaceae*

Genus: *Davidsonia*

Botanic name: *Davidsonia pruriens*

Davidsonia after J. E. Davidson. *Pruriens* from Latin meaning an itching sensation, a reference to the hairy surface of the leaves and stems

Also known as: Davidson's Plum, Sour Plum, Queensland Itch Tree

Indigenous name: Ooray

Origin: Australia. The Davidson Plum can be found in tropical rainforests in Queensland and northern NSW. It is considered to be at risk in the wild.

Habitat: There are two recognised varieties; *D.pruriens* var. *pruriens* is the northern form which is generally a much larger plant in all of its parts than the southern var. *jerseyana*. *D. pruriens* has adapted well to cultivation even in southern Australia.

Description: It is usually a small to medium sized palm shaped tree which can reach 10 metres under ideal conditions. It has distinctive, hairy, foliage which is usually bright pink when new. The leaves are divided into leaflets (pinnate) and may up to 800 mm long. The reddish-brown flowers occur in pendulous clusters in spring.

These are followed by purple, edible fruits up to 50 mm diameter which resemble small plums and form in clusters directly on the stem.

Propagation and cultivation: Plants are generally propagated from fresh seed but cuttings are also successful. Plants will grow in full to part sun and respond to regular applications of a complete garden fertilizer.

Uses: The Davidson plum has long been a food source for Indigenous Australians and for colonial settlers since the early 1900s. It was wild harvested for many years, and the popularity of the fruit as an ingredient for a range of food products, has seen the establishment of commercial plantations since 1990.



Sources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Davidsonia_pruriens

<http://anpsa.org.au/d-pru.html>

<http://ooray.com.au/aboutooray.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Ewan_Davison