

NATIVE AUSTRALIAN FOOD FACT SHEET:

'Old Man' Saltbush

Atriplex nummularia

'Old Man' Saltbush naturally occurs in most Australian states. The leaves are also edible, salty in flavour and rich in protein, antioxidants and minerals. It grows on saline, low-lying clay soils and floodplains, but is highly drought resistant and is planted for grazing fodder and to help control salt in soils.



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Uses:

Salads, stir-fry, stuffings, baked goods, deep fried.

Flavour/aroma/texture:

Salty, vegetable, herbaceous. Texture is soft and pliable.

Seasonality:

All year.

Edible parts of the plant:

Leaf, seeds.

Fresh/Frozen:

Fresh whole leaf, dried seed or dried milled leaf flakes.

Cultivation (growing):

Leaf - Grey to pale green leafed shrub up to 3m. Most fresh leaf sold is cultivated but some wild harvest is also undertaken.

Leaf - grey-green irregular-shaped leaves 2-6 cm long.

Seeds - small, flat, papery 3-5mm.

Harvest to kitchen (processing):

- Fresh leaves are picked, washed and sorted.

- Leaves are naturally or heat dried and may be processed into flakes by milling and screening to size.

- Seed is harvested from the female plants dry.

Kitchen to Plate (prep/cook):

- Whole leaf - as a vegetable (blanched/sautéed/stir fry/dip in batter and fried).

- Dried leaf, use as a herb to flavour breads, savoury biscuits and muffins, and coatings or spice blends or sprinkle on food as a light seasoning.

Shelf life:

Fresh leaf - 1-3 weeks chilled

Dried ground leaf - 1-2 years

Dried seed - 1-2 years

Storage:

Fresh - chilled

Dried ground leaf - ambient

Seed - ambient

Companion flavours:

Kale, Spinach.

Substitute:

Salted Kale or Spinach

Interesting facts:

Used as a feed source for stock eg. sheep.

In the wild, if in harsh stressed conditions, the leaf can be very bitter and astringent, but when cultivated in lush conditions, becomes far more palatable.

Reference resources:

<https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Old-man-saltbush-clusters-of-female-flowers-occur-on-the-ends-of-branches-Drawing-fig17-305575511>

[https://keys.lucidcentral.org/keys/v3/pastures/Html/Old man saltbush.htm](https://keys.lucidcentral.org/keys/v3/pastures/Html/Old%20man%20saltbush.htm)

<https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/digibook/3122184/bruce-pascoe-aboriginal-agriculture-technology-and-ingenuity>



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Nutritional Values*:

(per 1Kg dry weight)

H2O	76.7%
Protein	23.9%
Ca	5.4g
Cu	10mg
Fe	175mg
Mg	4.1g
P	3.4g
K	27.4g
S	8.0g
Zn	35mg
Mn	242mg
B	34g
Na	71.8g

Source:
oldmansaltbush.com

