

Bush tomato (desert raisin)

Solanum centrale

Some known Aboriginal names

Akatyerr (Alyewarr), Katyerr (Anmatyerr), Kampurarrpa (Pintupi), Yakajirri (Warlpiri)

Common names Bush tomato, desert raisin

Many say that the fruits should be called desert raisin.

Much of Australia's bush tomato crop is harvested from the wild by skilled Indigenous women. This fruit is an important Indigenous Central Australian plant food.

Description and Use

Fruit is usually 10-15mm in size. Fruit should be light to dark brown in colour and resemble a raisin.

Fruit are usually traded as dried, whole or dried & ground. Mature yellow fruit can also be eaten.

Dried fruits have intense earthy-tomato caramel flavours. Used as a savoury spice and added to soups marinades, stews and casseroles.

Quality requirements

- Produce from reputable dealers does not suffer from problems of mistaken (species) identity of wild harvested fruit.
- **However - Caution: All green fruit is toxic; ripe fruit of some related *Solanum* species are toxic.**
- Fruit should be air- or oven-dried, but not blackened or brittle
- No foreign matter should be present



Postharvest handling

- Harvested fruit should be sun-dried as soon as possible after picking.
- Low temperature (freezer <-20°C) storage of sun-dried fruit prevents insect damage.
- Following harvest insect pests attacking fruit can cause serious problems. Pests can be controlled effectively by heating the fruit to 60°C (interior batch temperature) for 12 hours.
- Cool storage of heat-treated fruit at <8°C will help preserve product quality.
- Store sealed hygienically in food grade polyethylene bags or sealed plastic containers. Better storage and shipping performance can be obtained from polyester or metallized polyester (112 micron) bags.
- Packaged product should be labelled with common and botanical names, date, area of harvest and harvester details.
- Foods Standards Australia New Zealand <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/> has information related to food standards and food safety (see Guide to the new Food Standards Code).
- If microbiological testing of produce is required, contact the local state authority (e.g. Department of Health) for guidance on accessing test laboratories.



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