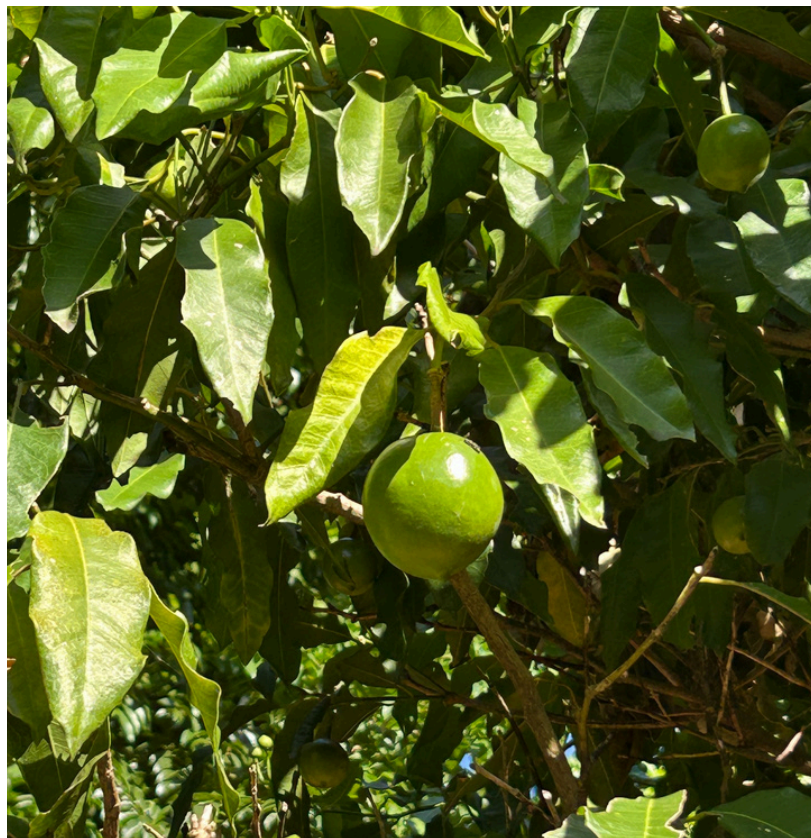


January 2026

# Plant of the month

## Native Pomegranate



**Common Name:** Native Pomegranate  
**Scientific Name:** *Capparis arborea* (F.Muell.) Maiden  
**Family:** Capparaceae  
**Genus:** *Capparis* – from the Greek *Kapparis* meaning from the Middle East and the name for Capers.  
**Species epithet:** *arborea* – tree-like.



There are 19 species of *Capparis* in Australia, many occurring in arid parts of the country including subspecies of *Capparis spinosa*. It is this widely occurring species that is known as the caper bush and buds have been pickled and fruit eaten in southern Europe for thousands of years.

*Capparis arborea* from the coastal rainforests of the east coast of Australia also has an edible fruit, used by Aboriginal cultural groups for millennia. In recent times it has become a popular, albeit slow-growing tree for bushfood and habitat gardens.

Look closely and you will see many white butterflies circling the trees. These include the more common Caper White (*Belenois java*) and the rarer, especially as far south as Sydney, Southern Pearl White Butterfly (*Elodina angulipennis*). Larvae feed on the leaves and adults feast on the nectar produced by flowers. Adults pollinate flowers ensuring the large, round fruit can form. Learn how to make an origami Caper White butterfly at the interactive kids' exhibition **City of Wonder: Wildflower Edition** at The Garden Gallery until 31 January.



### Join a guided walk

Scan the QR code to join a daily guided walk to learn more about our plants.

### Distribution

East coast of Australia from the Hunter river in NSW to Cape Melville in tropical Queensland.

### Native Habitat

Coastal rainforests including littoral, riverine, and dry rainforests or the drier margins of rainforests.

### Description

Small tree or large shrub to 8 m tall. Juvenile plants have small leaves clinging to stems with spines 4-15 mm long. Adult leaves are much larger, shiny above and slightly hairy below with spines reduced or lacking on mature branches.

### Flowers

Single or pairs of striking white flowers emerge from the leaf axils. Numerous long stamens sit well above white petals and sepals giving a pin-cushion effect.

### Fruit

Resembling a guava, green and smooth, globular in shape and around 3 cm in diameter. Fruit is ripe when yellow and the pulp surrounding the round, flattened seeds is edible.

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