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Davidsonia pruriens

DAVIDSON'S PLUM is a tree. Native to north-eastern Australia (particularly New South Wales and Queensland) it has reddish-brown flowers.

It is also known as Davidsonian plum, *Ooray* (Australian Aboriginal), and Queensland itch tree.

Warning – the fruit can cause stomach upsets for some people.

Pruriens is derived from Latin *prurio* (to itch) meaning 'causing an itch' with reference to the hairy leaves and stems.

The plum-like, blue-black berries with their soft juicy reddish-purple flesh are used locally for making jams, jellies and preserves, and they are stewed toowith added sweetening – after which they are still said to have a pleasant sharp taste. they are valued for colouring and flavouring ice cream and sauces as well. The fruit are also fermented for wine.

Apparently some bats are particularly partial to the fruit, not least flying foxes. They must also be feasted upon by cassowaries as these birds are singled out by some authorities as the prime distributors of the seeds.

The tough wood has been used to make tool handles and mallets.

The tree was introduced to Sri Lanka in 1892. In south-eastern Asia, in contrast to Australia, it would seem that authorities believe Davidson's plum is valued as a timber tree far more than a source of edible fruit.

Davidson's plum is often cultivated as an ornamental tree.