

Tasmannia lanceolata

Tasmannia lanceolata (syn. *Drimys lanceolata*).

Family: *Winteraceae*

Common names: **Mountain pepper, Tasmanian pepperberry, Cornish pepper leaf** (UK).



Tasmannia lanceolata Mt Buffalo, Vic (E.Bennetto)

Tasmannia lanceolata is a shrub native to woodlands and cool temperate rainforest of south-eastern Australia. The shrub varies from 2 to 10 m high. The aromatic leaves are lanceolate to narrow-elliptic, 4–12 cm long, and 0.7–2.0 cm wide, with a distinctly pale undersurface. Stems are quite red in colour. The small cream or white flowers appear in summer and are followed by black, globose, two-lobed berries 5–8 mm wide, which appear in autumn. There are separate male and female plants.

Originally described by French botanist Jean Louis Marie Poiret, it gained its current name in 1969 by A.C. Smith. It had been known for many years as *Drimys lanceolata*.

Uses The leaf and berry are used as a spice, typically dried. Mountain pepper was used as a colonial pepper substitute. More recently, it has become popularised as bushfood condiment. It can be added to curries, cheeses, and alcoholic beverages. It is exported to Japan to flavour *wasabi*. Dried *T. lanceolata* berries and leaves have strong antimicrobial activity against food spoilage organisms. It also has high antioxidant activity. Used in colonial medicine as a substitute for Winter's bark (stomachic) , it was also used for treating scurvy.

It can be grown as a garden plant, and its berries attract birds. Currawongs are among those which feed on them. It can be propagated from cuttings or seed, and can grow in a well-drained acidic soil with some shade, but is sensitive to *Phytophthora cinnamomi*.

Location in GBG In the fernery, near the western entrance. Previously planted unsuccessfully in the C21 Garden.

Not to be confused with:

Piper nigrum (*Piperaceae*)

Schinus molle (*Anacardiaceae*)

Macropiper excelsum (*Piperaceae*)

Pepper

Peppercorn

N.Z. Pepper

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