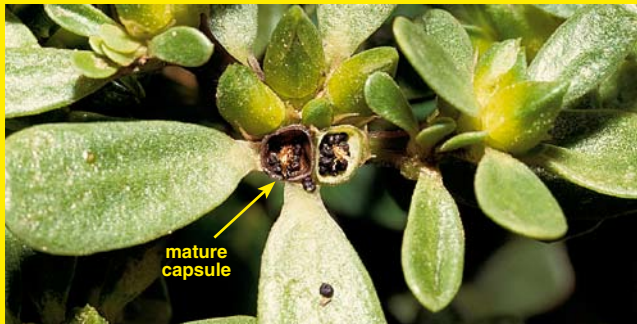
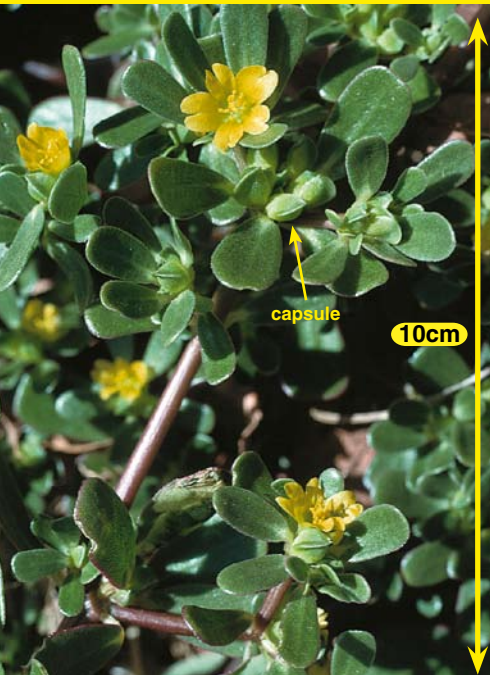


PIGWEEED

Portulaca oleracea

H6
HERB



PIGWEED

Portulaca oleracea



Alternative names: Purslane, Munyeroo.

Family: Portulacaceae.

Description: Succulent prostrate annual or short-lived perennial, with stems to 40 cm long. Leaves fleshy to 3 cm long and 1.5 cm wide. Some flowers open and some remain closed and are self-pollinated. Flowers that open are yellow and in the leaf axils (see photo). Seeds rounded, covered with wart-like outgrowths (see photo). Flowers any time depending on seasonal conditions.

Key features: Fleshy ovate (egg-shaped) leaves, often reddish stems and seed capsules (fruit) with a laterally flattened and 2-lobed lid that releases the numerous black seeds (see photo).

Value: Very palatable to stock, although if eaten excessively by hungry sheep or cattle may cause them problems from oxalate and nitrate poisoning—however in most cases the only problem is scouring.

Salinity and waterlogging tolerance: Moderate tolerance to salinity, but intolerant of sustained exposure to waterlogged soils.

Notes: A variable plant across Australia that may include native and introduced forms. Generally regarded as cosmopolitan in origin, it thrives in temperate and tropical regions. Eaten by early settlers and aborigines and the seed was collected and ground into a meal. Widespread and common, it is a major weed of row crop and horticulture.

References: *Flora of South Australia*, Jessop and Toelken (eds), Part 1, 4th edition, 1986. *Flora of Victoria*, Walsh and Entwisle (eds), Vol. 3, 1996. *Flora of NSW*, Harden (ed), Vol. 1, 1990. *Plants of Western NSW*, Cunningham et al., 1981.

