

NZ Myrtaceae Key - Online edition

Callistemon salignus (Sm.) Colvill ex Sweet

Synonyms

Melaleuca salicina Craven

Common Names

white bottlebrush, willow bottlebrush

Origin

Australia: low-lying river banks in south-eastern Queensland and eastern New South Wales.

Cultivation

In New Zealand almost exclusively found in cultivation; only a few records of it self-establishing.

Distribution

Scattered records from mainly urban areas in the North Island of New Zealand.

Distinguishing Features

- Bark grey, papery, peeling.
- New foliage growth purplish-pink.
- Leaves >3 mm wide.
- Leaf lateral veins obvious.
- Flowers at first in terminal spikes, but spike axes soon growing out into leafy shoots.
- Stamens free.
- Filaments cream-white to yellow.

Habit

Small to large tree with pendulous branches, 4 m tall.

Bark and Stem/Trunk

Bark white to light grey, papery and peeling. Branchlets with hairs.

Leaves

Adult leaves alternate, narrow-elliptic, mostly 60–90 mm long, 5–14 mm wide, leaf blade flat, hairy when young, soon becoming hairless, leaf surfaces not puckered, foliage soft, new growth purplish; margins entire and thick; tips pointed; leaf bases becoming gradually narrower; leaf stalks absent or short.

Flowers

Flowers produced in cylindrical spikes 40–50 mm long, 30–35 mm diam., flowers \pm 5–7 mm in diam., scented, stalks absent, petals 5, yellow-green to cream; sepals 5, tips free, hairy; stamens cream-white to yellow, usually 12–15 mm long, longer than petals, anthers yellow. Main flowering period: winter and spring.

Fruit

Fruit dry, 3–4-locular, each fruit \pm 4–5 mm wide.

Similar Species

Callistemon citrinus, *C. salignus* and *C. viminalis* are similar, but *C. citrinus* differs in that the leaves possess obvious lateral veins and are lightly lemon-scented when crushed, coupled with flowers that are generally pink, to red to purple and possess free stamens, as opposed to leaves that have obvious lateral veins but are not lemon-scented coupled with mostly cream-white to yellow flowers with free stamens in *C. salignus*, and unscented leaves without obvious lateral veins coupled with red flowers and stamens fused into a ring in *C. viminalis*.

Notes

Callistemon salignus is susceptible to myrtle rust (caused by *Austropuccinia psidii*).

Callistemon is a genus of about 50 species endemic to Australia. Some consider *Callistemon* to be better placed in *Melaleuca*. We follow the Australian Plant Census (APC) by recognising them as separate genera.

External Links

- GBIF
- iNaturalist NZ (*Melaleuca salicina*)
- [PlantNET: New South Wales Flora Online](#)
- [Plants of South Eastern New South Wales](#)

- VicFlora: Flora of Victoria

Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence (CC BY 4.0).

