

NZ Myrtaceae Key - Online edition

Corymbia calophylla (Lindl.) K.D.Hill & L.A.S.Johnson

Synonyms

Eucalyptus calophylla Lindl.

Common Names

marri, red gum

Origin

Australia: the well-watered parts of the south-west of Western Australia.

Cultivation

In New Zealand only found in cultivation; no naturalised specimens recorded.

Distribution

Scattered records from mainly urban areas, from throughout the North Island, and a few lowland South Island districts of New Zealand.

Distinguishing Features

- Tree with bark rough to the small branches, flaky, brown to grey-brown.
- Mature leaves that are alternate, the blade ovate to lanceolate, flat to slightly wavy, glossy to slightly glossy, darker green above, paler below, feather-veined.
- Leaves with numerous small, round, conspicuous oil glands.
- Conspicuous flowers, white or occasionally pink, in clusters of seven, grouped in flowerheads at ends of branches.
- Fruit in clusters of seven, the woody, urn-shaped capsules each up to 50 mm long and 40 mm wide, with disc descending vertically inside the capsule rim, 3–4 deeply enclosed valves, and seed that is not winged.

Habit

Tree to 40 m tall, or multi-stemmed shrub to 5 m on poor, infertile sites.

Bark and Stem/Trunk

Bark rough to the small branches, flaky, separating into thick, squarish flakes, brown to grey-brown; ribbons absent. Hairs and adventitious roots absent. Young stems round in cross-section, hairy or rough to about the eighth leaf node.

Leaves

Mature leaves alternate, blade ovate to broadly lanceolate or lanceolate, 70–190 mm long, 20–55 mm wide; leaf blade flat to slightly wavy, glossy to slightly glossy, darker green above, paler below, feather-veined, vein reticulation dense to very dense, intramarginal vein present but close to the leaf margin, numerous small, round oil glands; margins smooth; tips pointed; leaf bases tapering to the leaf stalk; leaf stalks 15–35 mm long.

Juvenile leaves alternate, broadly lanceolate to lanceolate; bases attached to the underside of the leaf blade (peltate) on first leaves, next leaves round to tapering; 45–240 mm long, 35–90 mm wide; margins usually smooth, glossy green. Lowest leaves rough-surfaced (scabrid), becoming smooth after about 4–5 leaf nodes.

Flowers

Flowers in clusters of seven, grouped in flowerheads terminal on branches, each cluster stalk angular, 15–35 mm long. Mature buds free, stalked, pear-shaped, 6–14 mm long, 6–10 mm wide, surface smooth (not scurfy). Bud cap hemispherical, sometimes with a central point. Flowers (stamens) white, rarely pink; in mature open flowers, petals and sepals absent. Main flowering period: summer to early autumn, and some flowers may occur during spring.

Fruit

Capsules woody, stalked (7–40 mm long), urn-shaped, 19–44(–50) mm long, 18–40 mm wide, disc descending vertically inside the capsule rim, valves 3–4, deeply enclosed. Seed not winged.

Similar Species

Corymbia calophylla and *C. ficifolia* have similar leaves, buds and capsules, but although both have rough bark throughout, the bark of *C. ficifolia* is usually thicker and more furrowed. The bright red/scarlet/orange flowers of *C. ficifolia*, as opposed to the white flowers of *C. calophylla*, is the most conspicuous difference. In the absence of flowers, the presence of conspicuous oil glands and non-winged seeds diagnoses *C. calophylla* and the lack of conspicuous oil glands and winged seeds diagnoses *C. ficifolia*. Hybridisation between two species may account for most pink-flowered trees seen in cultivation. Neither *C. calophylla* nor *C. ficifolia* has the distinctive lemon-scented leaves of *C. citriodora*, the other species of *Corymbia* occasionally present in New Zealand.

Notes

Corymbia is a genus of more than 100 species, mainly in Australia but also extending into New Guinea. Until 1990, *Corymbia* was included in the genus *Eucalyptus* and there remains debate among botanists as to whether separating them is valid. *Corymbia* is currently an accepted name in the Australian Plant Census (APC).

External Links

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