

## NZ Myrtaceae Key - Online edition

# Corymbia ficifolia (F.Muell.) K.D.Hill & L.A.S.Johnson

### Synonyms

*Eucalyptus ficifolia* F.Muell.

### Common Names

red-flowering gum, scarlet-flowering gum

### Origin

Western Australia: very restricted, subcoastal distribution south-east of Perth.

### Cultivation

In New Zealand almost exclusively found in cultivation; rare records of it self-establishing. Common and popular in horticulture because of its massed colourful flowers.

### Distribution

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

### Distinguishing Features

- Small tree with rough, furrowed bark throughout.
- Mature leaves alternate, variable in shape from ovate to broadly lanceolate, to 150 mm long and 50 mm wide, flat to slightly wavy, dull to slightly glossy, darker green above, paler below, feather-veined.
- Leaf oil glands inconspicuous or absent.
- Spectacular clusters of flowers, bright red to scarlet to orange, at ends of branches.
- Fruit in conspicuous clusters of stalked, woody, barrel-shaped to urn-shaped capsules, each up to 42 mm long and 30 mm wide, disc descending vertically inside the capsule rim, 3–4(–5) deeply enclosed valves, with seeds that have a terminal wing.

### Habit

Small tree to 10 m tall.

### Bark and Stem/Trunk

Bark rough to the small branches, fibrous, longitudinally furrowed, rarely flaky, brown to grey-brown or red-brown; ribbons absent. Hairs and adventitious roots absent. Young stems round in cross-section, sometimes scabrid on the lower portion.

### Leaves

Mature leaves alternate, blade ovate to broadly lanceolate, 70–130(–150) mm long, (22–)25–50(–55) mm wide, leaf blade flat to slightly wavy, dull to slightly glossy, darker green above, paler below; feather-veined, vein reticulation very dense, intramarginal vein present but very close to the leaf margin, oil glands inconspicuous or absent; margins smooth; tips pointed; leaf bases tapering to the leaf stalks (occasionally rounded); leaf stalks 8–20(–25) mm long.

Juvenile leaves stalked, alternate, ovate to broadly lanceolate, leaf bases variable, with a straight, rounded or heart-shaped lower edge, or with the stalk attached to the underside of the blade; lower leaves sometimes with a rough (scabrid) surface.

### Flowers

Flowers in clusters of seven, grouped in flowerheads terminal on branches, each cluster stalk round or angular, 15–32 mm long. Mature buds free, stalked, ovate to club-shaped, broadest away from the stalk, 12–18 mm long, 6–8 mm wide, surface smooth (not scurfy), cap conical to rounded to flattened, valves 3–4(–5). Flowers (stamens) spectacular, bright red to pink to orange; in mature open flowers, petals and sepals absent. Main flowering period: summer to autumn.

### Fruit

Capsules woody, stalked (stalks 15–27(–40) mm long), barrel-shaped to urn-shaped, 20–42 mm long, 18–30 mm wide, disc descending vertically inside the capsule rim, valves 3–4(–5), deeply enclosed. Seeds with terminal wing.

### 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

- EUCLID
- Flora of New Zealand Online
- GBIF
- iNaturalist NZ
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