

## NZ Myrtaceae Key - Online edition

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# *Leptospermum laevigatum* (Gaertn.) F.Muell.

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### Common Names

coast tea tree, coastal tea tree

### Origin

Australia: south-eastern Australia; the coastal areas of New South Wales, eastern Victoria and north-eastern Tasmania.

### Cultivation

In New Zealand planted as a garden ornamental or display tree being useful as a windbreak or hedging plant.

### Distribution

Scattered naturalised records from mainly coastal areas in the North Island and Nelson in the South Island of New Zealand.

### Distinguishing Features

- Leaves oblong to obovate.
- Leaves leathery.
- Sepals persistent.
- Stamens shorter than petals.
- Fruit with 7–10 locules.

### Habit

Often a multi-stemmed shrub or a small tree to about 6 m tall.

### Bark and Stem/Trunk

Older stems rough-barked, bark peeling in thin strips. Branchlets with hairs, becoming hairless with age.

### Leaves

Adult leaves alternate, oblong to obovate, 15–35 mm long, 5–12 mm wide, leaf blade flat, leathery, hairless with age, same colour on upper and lower surfaces, leaf surfaces not puckered; margins entire; tips blunt, though end in a small point (mucronate); leaf stalks absent or short.

### Flowers

Flowers solitary in leaf forks,  $\pm$  15–20 mm in diam., stalked, petals 5,  $\pm$  5–8 mm long, white; sepals 5,  $\pm$  2 mm long, tips free, hairy on the lower surface; stamens white, shorter than petals, about as long as the style. Main flowering period: late winter to spring.

### Fruit

Fruit dry, 7–10-locular,  $\pm$  7–8 mm wide.

### Similar Species

It is easily distinguished from other species in New Zealand by the almost oblong leaves and the capsules containing 7–10 cells. *Leptospermum scoparium* has narrow-lanceolate or ovate leaves and capsules contain 5 cells.

### Notes

*Leptospermum laevigatum* is listed as a Regional Pest Management Strategy species in New Zealand.

Although not declared or considered noxious by any state government in Australia, it is considered as a significant environmental weed in Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia.

*Leptospermum* is a genus of about 87 species, mostly Australian, but extending to Malesia and New Zealand.

### External Links

- Flora of New Zealand Online
- GBIF
- iNaturalist NZ
- NZPCN
- PlantNET: New South Wales Flora Online
- Plants of South Eastern New South Wales
- VicFlora: Flora of Victoria
- Weeds of Australia: Biosecurity Queensland

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