

NZ Myrtaceae Key - Online edition

Leptospermum lanigerum (Sol. ex Aiton) Sm.

Common Names

woolly tea tree

Origin

Australia: southern New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and south-eastern Victoria.

Cultivation

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

Distribution

Scattered records from mainly botanical gardens across New Zealand.

Distinguishing Features

- Leaves oblong to narrowly obovate.
- Leaves grey-green, hairy below; new growth often silvery-hairy.
- Sepals persistent.
- Stamens as long as or longer than petals.
- Young fruit woolly.
- Fruit valves very woody.

Habit

Shrub or small tree to 5 m or more tall.

Bark and Stem/Trunk

Stems smooth-barked, shedding in stringy strips, but fibrous on larger stems. Branchlets with hairs, becoming hairless with age.

Leaves

Adult leaves alternate, oblong to narrowly obovate, 6–13(–20) mm long, \pm 2–4(–8) mm wide, usually recurved, hairy at least below, leaves dull grey-green, lighter below, leaf blade flat, leaf surfaces not puckered; margins entire; apex tapering abruptly and infolded; tips blunt but with sharp point; leaf stalks absent or very short.

Flowers

Flowers solitary, axillary, \pm 15 mm in diam., stalked, petals 5, \pm 6 mm long, white; sepals 5, 2–4 mm long, tips free, hairy on the lower surface; stamens white, as long as or longer than petals, about as long as the style. Main flowering period: spring to summer.

Fruit

Fruit dry, 5-locular, \pm 5–15 mm wide, initially woolly, becoming woody and hairless with age, valves becoming wider than the base.

Similar Species

In terms of the key, this is the only species of non-indigenous *Leptospermum* with obovate, dull grey-green leaves mostly less than 10 mm long.

Notes

Leptospermum lanigerum possesses variable leaf hairiness in its home range. Some plants have hairless green leaves and lack the silky, silvery-grey leaves typical of the eastern plants. The plants in New Zealand are also variable in this regard.

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

External Links

- GBIF
- iNaturalist NZ
- 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).

