

NZ Myrtaceae Key - Online edition

Lophostemon confertus (R.Br.) Peter G.Wilson & J.T.Waterh.

Synonyms

Tristania conferta R.Br.

Common Names

Brisbane box, brush box, Queensland box

Origin

Papua New Guinea and Australian eastern coastal regions of Queensland and north-east New South Wales.

Cultivation

Common street tree planting in Australia, but less so in New Zealand. *Lophostemon confertus* 'Variegata' is a selection with variegated foliage.

Distribution

Recorded in the main centres of the North Island, most commonly in Auckland, with scattered plantings in warmer areas of the South Island of New Zealand, such as Nelson and near Sumner, Christchurch; largely confined to parks and large gardens.

Distinguishing Features

- Leaves whorled at the tips of branches.
- Flowers with sepals and petals.
- Stamens grouped into feather-like structures.
- Stamens opposite petals.
- Fruit a *Eucalyptus*-like woody capsule.

Habit

Tree up to 30 m tall.

Bark and Stem/Trunk

Bark rough, fibrous, brown on the lower trunk, smooth and pinkish-brown on the upper trunk and branches. Young branchlets hairy, becoming hairless with age.

Leaves

Leaves leathery, false whorls of 4–5 leaves at the tips of branches, becoming alternate lower down, lanceolate, blade 90–180 mm long, 25–45 mm wide, upper surface glossy dark green, paler below, leaf surface flat, not puckered, all surfaces hairy when young, becoming hairless with age, midrib raised, pale; margins entire; tips pointed, sometimes narrowing abruptly; leaf stalks 20–30 mm long.

Flowers

Flowers clustered in groups of 3–7, sometimes with flattened cluster stalk; flowers fragrant, \pm 20–30 mm in diam., flower stalks \pm 3–7 mm long, petals 5, circular outer lobe with a narrow base, 6–9 mm long, white, spreading; sepals 5, initially green, tips free, not persistent for long; stamens white, numerous, grouped into feather-like structures 10–20 mm long, opposite petals, longer than petals. Main flowering period: spring to early summer.

Fruit

Fruit a woody, hemi-spherical or funnel-shaped capsule, 3–4-valved, \pm 11 mm wide, dome of capsule level with calyx tube.

Similar Species

The combination of leaves whorled at the tips of branches, flowers with sepals and petals (*Eucalyptus* is without sepals and petals – fused to form flower bud cap), and stamens grouped into feather-like structures opposite petals uniquely identifies *L. confertus*.

Notes

Lophostemon confertus is widely utilised for its timber and amenity values.

Lophostemon is a genus of four species indigenous to Australia, with one species extending to New Guinea.

External Links

- [Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants](#)
- [Flora of New Zealand Online](#)
- [GBIF](#)
- [iNaturalist NZ](#)

- PlantNET: New South Wales Flora Online
- Plants of South Eastern New South Wales
- Weeds of Australia: Biosecurity Queensland

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