

NZ Myrtaceae Key - Online edition

Luma apiculata (DC.) Burret

Common Names

arrayán, Chilean myrtle, cinnamon myrtle, orange-bark myrtle

Origin

South America, central Andes between Chile and Argentina.

Cultivation

Its fruit is appreciated as being edible in Chile and Argentina, where its flowers are important for honey production, but in New Zealand it is mainly planted for the contrast of the glossy foliage and slender orange-brown stems. Occasional in gardens, parks, and as street trees. Cultivars with variegated foliage, *Luma apiculata* 'Glanleam Gold' and 'Variegata', are less common but also grown.

Distribution

In New Zealand recorded mainly from gardens in Auckland, Hamilton, Rotorua, Tauranga, Gisborne, Napier, New Plymouth, Wellington in the North Island, and Nelson, Christchurch, Dunedin and Invercargill in the South Island, as well as Stewart Island.

Distinguishing Features

- Leaves glossy above, elliptic to sub-orbicular, with sharp tips \pm 1 mm long.
- Flowers with 4 sepals and petals.
- Fruit rounded.
- Fruit fleshy, purple-black.
- Fruit 2-locular.

Habit

Tree up to 6 m tall, trunk often twisted and contorted.

Bark and Stem/Trunk

Bark smooth, warm orange-brown with cream patches, peeling. Young branchlets and stems hairy, becoming hairless with age.

Leaves

Leaves opposite, elliptic to sub-orbicular, 10–45 mm long, 5–35 mm wide, upper surface glossy green, paler below, sometimes a few scattered oil glands, leaf surface flat or with margins curved downwards, not puckered, upper surface hairless, lower surface hairless, midrib not raised, hairy at first, becoming hairless with age; margins entire, hairy at first, becoming hairless with age; tips abruptly pointed, main vein extended (apiculate) with tip \pm 1 mm long; leaf stalks \pm 1–2 mm long.

Flowers

Flowers single in the leaf axils, or in pairs on a shared axillary stalk, \pm 10–12 mm in diam., individual flower stalks \pm 5–10 mm long, petals 4, rounded, white, spreading, \pm 3–5 mm long; sepals 4, initially green, but colouring purple as fruit develops, tips free, persistent, stamens many, white, 5–7 mm long, longer than petals. Main flowering period: mid-summer to autumn.

Fruit

Fruit a fleshy purple-black, round berry, persistent erect sepals on top of the fruit, 2-locular, \pm 10–12 mm wide.

Similar Species

Fruit of *L. apiculata* is similar to *Myrtus communis*, but the former has flowers with four sepals and petals and 2-locular round, purple-black fruit separated from the latter that possesses flowers with 5 sepals and petals and 3-locular, ellipsoid to sub-globose, blue-black fruit.

Notes

Luma is a genus of two species indigenous to Chile and Argentina. Only *L. apiculata* is known to be present in New Zealand.

External Links

- [CitSciHub](#)
- [Flora of New Zealand Online](#)
- [GBIF](#)
- [iNaturalist NZ](#)
- [NZPCN](#)

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