

NZ Myrtaceae Key - Online edition

Melaleuca hypericifolia Sm.

Common Names

hillock bush, red flowered paperbark, red honey-myrtle

Origin

Australia: coastal and sub-coastal regions of south-eastern New South Wales; naturalised in Victoria and South Australia.

Cultivation

In New Zealand planted in parks and gardens as an ornamental shrub; occasionally naturalised in North Auckland, especially north of Kaitaia.

Distribution

Occasional in lowland areas of the North Island of New Zealand.

Distinguishing Features

- Shrub to \pm 6 m tall, branches slightly weeping, with hard to somewhat papery bark.
- Leaves in opposite pairs that are at right angles to the pair below, to 40 mm long, 14 mm wide, mid-green, oval, flat or bird-winged in cross-section.
- Flowers in a dense spike to 50 mm long, 60 mm wide, with bundles of long red stamens to \pm 20–27 mm long, filaments in each bundle fused basally for 12–16 mm.
- Capsules collectively in a dense cylindrical spike to 65 mm long, each capsule bell-shaped, to 7 mm long and 12 mm wide with 5 conspicuous persistent calyx lobes.
- Flowers spring to autumn.

Habit

Shrub to \pm 6 m tall, with loosely hanging branches.

Bark and Stem/Trunk

Bark hard or somewhat papery. Branchlets initially hairy, later almost hairless.

Leaves

Leaves arranged in opposite pairs, each pair being at right angles to the pair below, oval, 10–40 mm long, 4–14 mm wide, flat or bird-winged in cross-section, mid-green, hairs on midrib and at the base of the blade, becoming almost hairless, oil glands dense, scattered; margin entire; tip blunt or pointed; leaf stalks to \pm 1 mm long.

Flowers

Flowers in a dense spike 30–50 mm long, up to 60 mm wide, of 10–40 flowers, on short, often leafless lateral shoots that grow on into leafy shoots. Petals 5, fall early. Sepal lobes 1.5–2 mm long, hairless on the outside. Stamens 16–25 per bundle, red to salmon-red or orange-red, 20–27 mm long, filaments in each bundle fused basally for 12–16 mm. Style 18–30 mm long. Main flowering period: spring to summer.

Fruit

Capsules woody, collectively in a dense spike 50–65 mm long, individual capsules bell-shaped, 5–7 mm long, 6–12 mm wide, calyx lobes persistent.

Similar Species

The foliage of this species is similar to some species in the genus *Hypericum*, but the red 'bottle-brush' flower spikes distinguish it and are characteristic of *Melaleuca*. *Melaleuca fulgens*, rarely cultivated in New Zealand, also usually has red flowers (although they may be apricot or pink), and broad leaves somewhat similar to *M. hypericifolia*, but leaves are shorter, to only 30 mm long; it has a much greater number of stamens per bundle (39–70) up to 18 mm long, whereas *M. hypericifolia* has 16–20 per bundle, ranging from 12–16 mm long.

Notes

Melaleuca is a genus of about 230 species, centred in Australia but extending to Asia, Malesia, and New Caledonia. We follow the Australian Plant Census (APC) by recognising *Melaleuca* and *Callistemon* as separate genera.

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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