

NZ Myrtaceae Key - Online edition

Syzygium floribundum F.Muell.

Synonyms

Waterhousea floribunda (F.Muell.) B.Hyland, *Eugenia ventenatii* Benth.

Common Names

weeping lilly pilly, weeping myrtle, weeping satinash

Origin

Australia: rainforest, especially stream banks, of New South Wales and Queensland.

Cultivation

In New Zealand planted in parks and gardens, or for shelter; occasionally naturalised from nearby planted specimens.

Distribution

Occasional in lowland North Island areas of New Zealand.

Distinguishing Features

- A medium to large tree usually up to about 6 m tall in cultivation, with weeping branches and dark grey, hard to somewhat flaky bark.
- Leaves opposite, lanceolate to narrow oval, tapered both ends, to 160 mm long and 50 mm wide, margins wavy, upper surface dark green and glossy, lower surface dull and paler; stalk 2–7 mm long.
- New growth pink to red in spring.
- Flowers in many-flowered clusters to 200 mm long at or near the end of young branches. Flowers white to cream, petals 1.5–2 mm long.
- Stamens numerous, to 7 mm long, longer than petals.
- Fruit berry-like, globe-shaped, 15–20 mm in diameter, with a pronounced rim ± 1–2 mm high at the apex; fruit green but developing a pink to reddish tinge at maturity.

Habit

A medium to large tree to 30 m tall in its natural habitat but usually much smaller, up to about 6 m, in cultivation, with weeping branches.

Bark and Stem/Trunk

Bark dark grey, hard and somewhat flaky, sometimes fissured. Ribbons and adventitious roots absent. Young stems are covered in scattered fine hair.

Leaves

Leaves opposite, lanceolate to narrow oval, 55–160 mm long, 15–50 mm wide, hairless, upper surface dark green and glossy, lower surface dull and paler, new growth pink to red in spring; numerous straight lateral veins and vein inside the leaf margin are visible; oil glands numerous, fine; margins wavy; tips tapered and sharp-pointed; base wedge-shaped; leaf stalks 2–7 mm long.

Flowers

Flowers produced from late spring to mid-summer in many-flowered clusters to 200 mm long at or near the end of young branches. Individual flower stalks to 3 mm long; sepals inconspicuous, petals 1.5–2 mm long, white to cream, petals cohering, shed together; numerous stamens 3–7 mm long, longer than petals. Main flowering period: late winter to spring.

Fruit

Fruit berry-like, globe-shaped, 15–20 mm wide, with a pronounced rim ± 1–2 mm high, the remains of the calyx tube (hypanthium) at the apex, calyx lobes persistent but small and inconspicuous; contains one large seed, that has an embryo with cotyledons not smooth but with a distinctive, irregular outline; fruit green but developing a pink to reddish tinge at maturity.

Similar Species

Syzygium floribundum usually has longer leaves (to 160 mm) than other *Syzygium* species in New Zealand, which have leaves up to 100 mm long, or occasionally to 120 mm in *S. smithii*, and to only ± 60 mm for *S. maire*. Fruit of *S. floribundum* are globular with a pronounced apical rim ± 1–2 mm high (persistent calyx), green maturing to pink or reddish. Fruit of *S. smithii* are whitish pink to pale purple, and globular with an apical depression; those of *S. australe* are oblong to ovate, broadest towards the apex, crimson to crimson-purple, usually glossy; *S. paniculatum* has globose to ovate fruit that are usually bright magenta but may occasionally be white, pink or purple. *S. oleosum*, blue lilly pilly, also present occasionally in New Zealand, has leaves to 120 mm long with a long, narrow, tapered tip, numerous oil glands that are strongly translucent, and globular fruit that are red when young, changing to purplish blue when ripe, with a small apical cavity similar to that of *S. smithii*.

Notes

Syzygium floribundum was re-classified some years ago as *Waterhousea floribunda* and some authorities refer to it as the latter name. However, the Australian Plant Census (APC) still accepts the earlier name, and that is the one accepted here. Still frequently referred to as *Waterhousea floribunda* and sometimes sold commercially as *Eugenia ventenatii* or *S. ventenatii*. In horticulture, *S. australis* is sometimes used interchangeably, particularly for cultivars. The presence or absence of the 'pocket' on young stems should be a guide to the species.

Syzygium is a genus of more than 1,200 species in Africa, Asia, Malesia, Australasia, New Caledonia and the Pacific Islands.

External Links

- Flora of New Zealand Online
- GBIF
- iNaturalist NZ
- NZPCN
- PlantNET: New South Wales Flora Online (*Waterhousea floribunda*)
- Plants of South Eastern New South Wales

Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence (CC BY 4.0).

