

## NZ Myrtaceae Key - Online edition

# *Syzygium paniculatum* Gaertn.

### Synonyms

*Eugenia paniculata* Gaertn. J.Britt. nom. illeg.

### Common Names

brush cherry, magenta cherry, magenta lilly pilly, scrub cherry

### Origin

Australia: indigenous but uncommon in coastal rainforest areas of New South Wales.

### Cultivation

In New Zealand planted in parks and gardens, or for shelter; self establishes freely in shade, including indigenous forest, parks and gardens.

### Distribution

Lowland areas of the North Island; uncommon in the South Island of New Zealand.

### Distinguishing Features

- A dense bushy upright tree to 15 m tall with brown bark that is flaky to hard, rough and fissured.
- Young stems have smooth internodes above and below the nodes.
- Leaves opposite, lanceolate to oval and widest above the middle, to 100 mm long, 30 mm wide, apex tapered and sharp-pointed, base tapered, hairless, upper surface green and glossy, lower surface paler, side veins numerous.
- New foliage growth is coppery-coloured.
- Flowers in clusters at or near the end of young branches. Petals round, white, 4–5 mm long.
- Stamens numerous, white, 6–15 mm long, longer than petals.
- Fruit berry-like, globose to ovate, to 25 mm diam., usually magenta; seed solitary, usually having many embryos, cotyledons smooth.

### Habit

A dense bushy upright tree to 15 m tall.

### Bark and Stem/Trunk

Bark brown, flaky to hard, rough and fissured, trunk diameter up to 35 cm; young stems with smooth internodes above and below the nodes. Ribbons and adventitious roots absent.

### Leaves

Leaves opposite, lanceolate to oval and widest above the middle, 30–100 mm long, 15–30 mm wide, hairless, upper surface green and glossy, lower surface paler, new foliage growth coppery-coloured, side veins numerous, vein inside the leaf margin usually visible; oil glands small, rather scattered; tip tapered and sharp-pointed; base wedge-shaped, leaf stalks 2–10 mm long.

### Flowers

Flowers produced in summer in clusters at or near the end of young branches. The individual flower stalks may vary from 1–15 mm long, the funnel-shaped calyx is green at first, maturing to red; petals round, white, 4–5 mm long, free and spreading. Stamens numerous, white, 6–15 mm long, longer than petals; style equal in length to longest stamens. Main flowering period: summer to early autumn.

### Fruit

Fruit berry-like, globose to ovate, 15–25 mm wide, magenta (occasionally white, pink or purple). Seed solitary, usually having many embryos, cotyledons smooth.

### Similar Species

In New Zealand, *S. paniculatum* is sometimes sold erroneously as *S. australe*. The two can be distinguished even when young from the leafy twigs, which in *S. paniculatum* have smooth internodes above and below the nodes, whereas *S. australe* has its leafy twigs generally 4-angled or shortly 4-winged, pairs of wings running down from each leaf stalk but joining and forming a pocket or hump above the next lower pair of leaves. *S. australe* appears to be a lot less common in cultivation than *S. paniculatum* and, compared with the latter, wild seedlings are uncommon in *S. australe*. Fruit of *S. paniculatum* can be distinguished from other species in New Zealand by the single, large seed that is solitary but usually has lines of division showing the many embryos.

The Australian species of *Syzygium* in New Zealand have some similarities in foliage, flowers and fruit. *S. paniculatum* has globose to ovate fruit that are usually bright magenta but may occasionally be white, pink or purple; fruit of *S. australe* are oblong to ovate, broadest towards the apex, crimson to crimson-purple, usually glossy; 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; *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

The name *S. paniculatum* was formerly misapplied to what is now known as *S. australe*. It is widely cultivated and has become naturalised in some countries.

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

## External Links

- CitSciHub
- Flora of New Zealand Online
- GBIF
- iNaturalist NZ
- NZPCN
- PlantNET: New South Wales Flora Online
- Plants of South Eastern New South Wales

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