PLANT FACT SHEET

Melaleuca leucadendra (L.) L.

GENUS *Melaleuca* **FAMILY** Myrtaceae

COMMON NAMES Weeping Paperbark, Cajuput, Weeping Tea-tree

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: flower - nectar, Leaves - tea, Fruit - tea, Leaves - flavouring

The leaves are used to flavour cooking.
The fruit and leaves are used for tea.
It is also the source of an essential oil. This is used to flavour candy, baked goods, relishes and drinks.
The flower nectar can be used to make a sweet drink.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen tree. It grows to a height of 10-40 m and with a spread of 5-8 m. The trunk is upright and the branches hang over. The bark is pale, thick, soft and spongy. This papery bark is a distinctive feature of the tree. The leaves are simple and long. They are about 7-20 cm long by 1-2 cm wide. The leaves are pale or dull dark green colour and carried one after another along opposite sides of the stalk. They have a short leaf stalk. The 5 or 6 veins of the leaf run along the leaf. The flowers are cream, green or slightly pink and are carried without a stalk. The flowers are carried on a 10 cm long stalk. The flowers are at the end of branches of the upper leaves and appear in winter. They have 1-1.5 cm long stamens. The flowers are scented. The flowers make a showy display. The fruit is a small cup-shaped woody capsule about 0.3-0.4 cm across. These capsules turn brown when ripe and carry many very small seeds.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant and prefers an open sunny position. It will also grow in subtropical and warm temperate regions. Moist loose soils are suitable. It often grows naturally along streams and on deep sandy soils. It is damaged by drought and frost. It can tolerate being occasionally flooded by seasonal rains. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are easily grown from seed. Seeds germinate easily and seedling grow rapidly. Plants can need support during the early stages if in exposed places. Plants respond to being well watered and to applied fertiliser.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It is fast growing. Flowering is April to September. Fruit are produced mainly May to October.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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