PLANT FACT SHEET

Melaleuca quinquenervia (Cav.) S.T. Blake

GENUS *Melaleuca* **FAMILY** Myrtaceae

COMMON NAMES Paperbark, Bellbowrie, Broad-leaved Paperbark, Punk tree, Tea-tree oil

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: flower - nectar, Bark - oil, Leaves - tea

The blossums in water are used for a drink.
The bark yields an oil which is used in flavouring.
The blossum and young leaves are used for tea. They young leaves are sour and eaten raw.
The nectar from the flowers can be used to make a sweet drink.
Caution: The aroma can cause allergies.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized tree. It grows 8-20 m high. It spreads to 5-10 m wide. The bark is grey and papery. Young growth is grey and covered with silky hairs. The leaves are 5-10 cm long by 0.5-2.5 cm wide. They are narrowly oval. The leaf stalk is 0.4-1 cm long. The leaves are dull green, thick and leathery. There are 3-5 prominent veins. The leaves have a lemon scent. The flower heads are near the ends of branches and are 4-8 cm long by 2-3 cm wide. They are like a cylinder and spike-like. Flowers are creamy white and have a scent. The fruit is a capsule 0.3 cm across and cup-shaped. Seeds are shed each year.

HABITAT

It is a subtropical and warm temperate plant. It occurs near swamps and waterways. It needs to be in a frost free area. They can grow in brackish or salty soils. Trees can grow permanently in water up to 1 m deep. It suits hardiness zones 9-11. Melbourne Botanical Gardens.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. Plants can also be grown from cuttings.

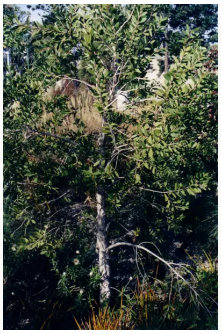
NOTES

It has become a serious weed in some locations.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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