PLANT FACT SHEET

Melaleuca argentea W. V. Fitzg.

GENUS *Melaleuca* **FAMILY** Myrtaceae

COMMON NAMES Silver-leaved Paperbark

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves - flavouring, flower - nectar

The leaves are used to flavour meat in cooking.

DESCRIPTION

A tall spreading tree. It grows 10-20 m high. It spreads to 10-25 m wide. The branches are slender and hang downwards. The leaves are silvery-green. The bark is papery and light grey. It is soft and layered. The leaves are produced alternately. They are silvery and covered with silky hairs when young. The leaves are long and narrow and widest in the middle but tapering to each end. They are 5-14 cm long by 0.6-2 cm wide. There are 3-5 veins along the leaf. The leaves are pointed at the tip. The leaf stalk is hairy and 0.4-1 cm long. The flowers are cream with many stamens. They have a strong scent. Flowers are 1.2-1.5 cm long and stalkless. The form cylinder shaped spikes which can be 5-12 cm long by 2.5-3 cm wide. The spikes occur in clusters of 4 near the end of branches. The fruit are small cup-shaped woody capsules. They do not have stalks and are 0.3 cm across. They are grey-brown when ripe. They have many very small seeds.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It will grow in the subtropics and warm temperate regions. In tropical Queensland it grows from sea level to 400 m altitude. They grow naturally along the banks of freshwater creeks. They are on sandy loam soils. The soil needs to be well drained. They can tolerate occasional flooding. They can tolerate light frosts. It can grow in semi arid areas.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed.

Harvesting and Seed Production

In Australia, plants flower from June to October and fruit from October to January.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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