

Polygala myrtifolia

COMMON NAME

sweet pea shrub

FAMILY

Polygalaceae

AUTHORITY

Polygala myrtifolia L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

POLMYR

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

HABITAT

Terrestrial. Susceptible to frost. Coastal areas, forest margins, open land, islands, inland scrub. Seeds are dispersed by wind and sometimes water; the majority fall close to the parent plant.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Perennial much-branched shrub up to 2m high. Young stems with short curly hairs, glabrous when older. Leaves all alternate, glabrous or very sparsely hairy, elliptic to obovate, obtuse or rarely slightly retuse, entire, 15~30mm long; petioles 1~2mm long. Flowers clustered in short simple terminal racemes; perianth coloured or veined purple toward apex; pedicels 5~8mm long; bracts suborbicular, 2~3mm long, persistent; 3 outer sepals ovate, 5~7mm long; wings petaloid, ovate-orbicular, approx. 15~17mm long, slightly > corolla; outer petals 2-lobed, around 1/3~1/4 length of keel; keel with a fimbriate crest near apex. Capsule glabrous, around 10mm long with a marginal wing about 1mm wide, approx. 2/3 length of persistent calyx wings; seeds hairy, dark brown, oblong, about 5mm long; strophiole 3-lobed.

SIMILAR TAXA

Much-branched shrub up to 2m; leaves are 2.5cm, alternate, oval and light green; younger stems of the plant are covered in short, curly hairs; pea-like flowers, 1.5cm long, are clustered at the end of each short branchlet; petals are pinky-purple, middle petal is white with a purple blush ending in a tuft of white hairs; seeds are dark brown and hairy in a 10mm winged capsule.

FLOWERING

January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December

FLOWER COLOURS

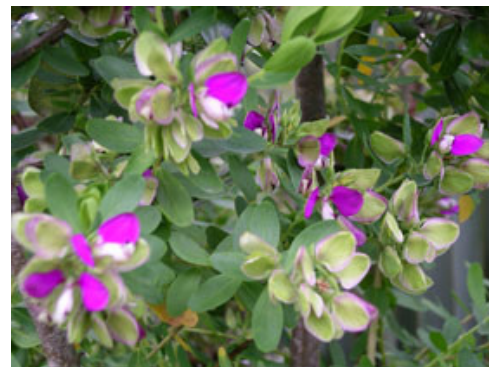
Red/Pink, Violet/Purple

LIFE CYCLE

Perennial. Prolific seeder;

YEAR NATURALISED

1870



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ORIGIN

South Africa

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

TOLERANCES

Tolerant of shade and wet conditions. Seedlings regrow after fire.

NATIONAL PEST PLANT ACCORD SPECIES

This plant is listed in the 2020 National Pest Plant Accord. The National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) is an agreement to prevent the sale and/or distribution of specified pest plants where either formal or casual horticultural trade is the most significant way of spreading the plant in New Zealand. For up to date information and an electronic copy of the 2020 Pest Plant Accord manual (including plant information and images) visit the [MPI website](#).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/polygala-myrtifolia/>