

Syzygium australe

COMMON NAMES

brush cherry

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

SIMPLIFIED DESCRIPTION

Large shrub or small tree to 10m; smooth, light grey bark; white petals; fruit 2x2.5cm, oblong to ovoid, crimson to purple (Webb et al., 1988).

FLOWER COLOURS

White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Large shrub or small tree to approx. 10m high; bark smooth, light grey; pneumatophores 0. Branchlets pendent, angular. Leaves aromatic when crushed; petiole < 10mm long. Lamina mostly 4~10 x 1~3.5cm, sometimes smaller near base of branchlets and below infl., often narrowly elliptic, sometimes elliptic or obovate, glossy, slightly undulate; veins numerous, conspicuous and parallel; base attenuate or narrowly cuneate; apex mostly cuspidate to acuminate, but sharply acute in obovate leaves. Cymes with 3~25 flowers, terminal or in the upper axils of short leafy branchlets, to about 15cm diam.; peduncles to approx. 4cm long; pedicels shorter, slender, angular. Hypanthium 4~6mm long at anthesis, obconic, generally dark red at least on exposed side; pseudopedicel hardly evident; calyx lobes 2~4mm long, broadly triangular-ovate, sometimes dark red, persistent on fruit. Petals around 4mm diam., free, suborbicular, white, caducous. Stamens to approx. 13mm long, white. Style generally = longest stamens. Fruit 1~2 x .7~1.5cm, oblong to obovoid, crimson to crimson-purple, usu. glossy. Seed 1 or few, large; cotyledons green. (Webb et al., 1988)

SIMILAR TAXA

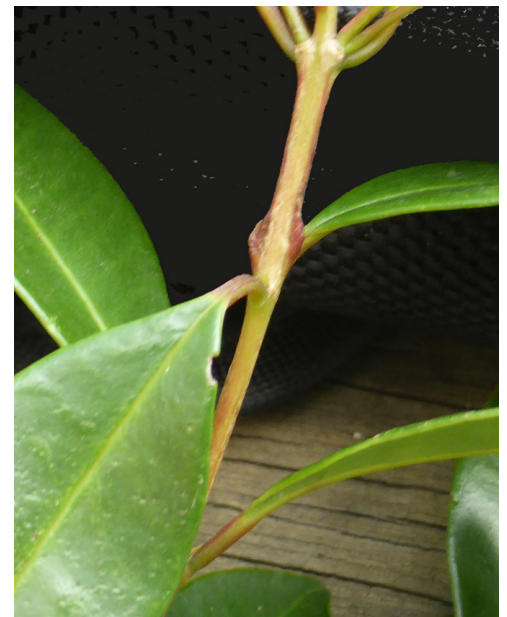
Syzygium paniculatum. In NZ, *S. paniculatum* is sometimes sold erroneously as *S. australe*. The two can be distinguished even when young from the leafy twigs, which in *S. paniculatum* have smooth internodes above and below the nodes, whereas *S. australe* has its leafy twigs "generally 4-angled or shortly 4-winged, pairs of wings running down from each petiole but amalgamating and forming a pocket or hump above the next lower pair of leaves." These can be seen in the photo on this page taken in Wellington Zoological Gardens.

http://keys.trin.org.au/key-server/data/0e0f0504-0103-430d-8004-060d07080d04/media/Html/taxon/Syzygium_australe.htm

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*.



"Pockets" on internodes. Wellington Zoological Gardens. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Date taken: 01/05/2009, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Node showing swellings on stem above; garden, Hawera. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Date taken: 28/02/2018, Licence: CC BY-NC.

HABITAT

Terrestrial.

THREATS

This taxon may be prone to Myrtle Rust (*Austropuccinia psidii*) is an invasive fungus which threatens myrtle species - learn more myrtlerust.org.nz

GENUS

Syzygium

FAMILY

Myrtaceae

AUTHORITY

Syzygium australe (J.C.Wendl. ex Link) B.Hyland

SYNONYMS

Eugenia australis Wendl. ex Link

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

January, February, March, April, May, June, July

YEAR NATURALISED

1983

ORIGIN

Qld, NSW

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Perennial. The fleshy fruit are distributed by birds (Webb et al., 1988).

ETYMOLOGY

syzygium: From the Greek syzygos 'joined', referring to the paired leaves

australe: Southern, from the Latin australis

ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)

This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC. 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report [here](#).

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to the Myrtaceae of New Zealand](#)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/syzygium-australe/>

PDF DATE

27 May 2026