

# Melianthus major

## COMMON NAME

Cape honey flower

## FAMILY

Melianthaceae

## AUTHORITY

Melianthus major L.

## FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

## STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

## CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

## HABITAT

Terrestrial.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Shrub to approx. 2m high with stout, soft-wooded hollow stems and suckering root system. Leaves to 50cm long, glaucous below. Stipules fused and sheathing, 7~15cm long, ovate, cuspidate. Rachis winged. Leaflets 11~21, sessile, 8~15 x 3.5~7.5cm, gradually tapering towards apex, usu. folded, regularly and deeply serrate with teeth about 1cm long; basal pair smaller. Racemes dense, to around 40cm long, puberulent. Pedicels 1~2.5cm long, dark red, with short glandular hairs. Bracts ovate or narrow-ovate, to 4cm long, reddish-brown, short-acuminate. Flowers foetid, dark reddish-brown. Anterior calyx segment much < others, gibbous, with short glandular hairs. Posterior calyx segments 2~3cm long, ovate, with short glandular hairs. Petals much < calyx. Stamens around 2cm long. Style 1.5~2cm long. Capsule 2.5~5cm long, papery, acutely angled. Seeds 5~6mm long, broad-ellipsoid, keeled, shining black. (- Webb et. al., 1988)

## SIMILAR TAXA

Shrub to 2m with stout, soft-wooded, hollow stems and a suckering root system; leaves 50cm long, underside blue/green; leaflets 11-21 with no stems, 8-15 x 3.5-7.5 cm, gradually tapering, regularly and deeply serrate with teeth about 1cm long; flowers dark, reddish brown and strong smelling; seeds 5-6mm, shining black (Webb et al., 1988).

## FLOWERING

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

## FLOWER COLOURS

Brown, Red/Pink

## LIFE CYCLE

Perennial.

## YEAR NATURALISED

1878

## ORIGIN

S Africa



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Pods, Queen's Park, Whanganui. Photographer: Colin C. Ogle, Date taken: 06/02/2016, Licence: CC BY-NC.

## REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

## ETYMOLOGY

**major:** Greater

## MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/melianthus-major/>