

Manuka

Leptospermum scoparium J. R. & G. Forst.

Myrtle family (Myrtaceae)

Post-Cook introduction

Introduced aromatic ornamental evergreen shrub or small tree with needlelike leaves on very slender erect twigs, whitish or pinkish flowers borne singly on short twigs, and shreddy bark on angled trunks.

Shrub or small tree to 20 ft (6 m) high and 6 inches (15 cm) in trunk diameter, with irregular crown of many nearly erect wiry branches. Bark gray brown, fissured and shreddy, with thick outer layer. Inner bark light pink, fibrous, slightly bitter or astringent. Twigs very slender, erect or nearly so, gray and finely hairy when young, becoming fissured and rough.

Leaves borne singly (alternate), stalkless, needle-like and very narrow (linear), $\frac{5}{16}$ – $\frac{5}{8}$ inch (8–15 mm) long and about $\frac{1}{16}$ inch (1.5 mm) wide, sharp-pointed, narrowed to stalkless base, thin, slightly stiff, with whitish pressed hairs when young, dull green above, paler beneath, with tiny gland-dots visible under lens.

Flowers single and almost stalkless at end of short side twigs, about $\frac{5}{8}$ inch (15 mm) across. The green conical base (hypanthium) $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (3 mm) long bears on rim five whitish pointed sepals, five rounded petals whitish or turning pinkish, and many threadlike white stamens, and has pistil with inferior ovary and slender style.

Fruits (seed capsules) nearly stalkless, bell-shaped, $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (6 mm) long and broad, gray, hard, and becoming very wrinkled, five-celled, opening at flattened top along five spreading starlike lines, remaining attached on older twigs. Seeds many, tiny, reddish brown, $\frac{1}{16}$ inch (1.5 mm) long.

Wood light brown, hard, used elsewhere for tool handles and in small boats. Not used in Hawaii.

Planted as an ornamental shrub in Hawaii and southern California, where several horticultural varieties are distinguished. Propagated by seeds and cuttings. It is naturalized and has become a pest on Lanai, Lanai. Also naturalized on Kauai and Oahu at 1,100–3,900 ft (335–1,189 m).

Range

Native to Australia and New Zealand.

Other common names

teatree, broom teatree, New-Zealand-tea.

The common name teatree refers to the use of the aromatic foliage as a substitute for tea by early settlers in Australia.



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Leptospermum scoparium J. R. & G. Forst.
Twig with flowers and fruits, 1 X.