



PLANT CLASSIFICATION IDENTIFICATION OF FAMILY MYRTACEAE

INTRODUCTION

Australia is home to a unique range of plants. One of the best known of the plant families is Family Myrtaceae. This group includes many popular garden specimens such as the bottle brushes, lilly pillies and gum trees. Members of the Proteaceae family are also popular now in Australian gardens. These include the grevilleas and banksias, among others.

Family Myrtaceae

The plants of Family Myrtaceae are shrubs and trees found in the tropics, sub-tropics and temperate Australia. They are characterised by radially symmetrical flowers with a reduced calyx (sepals) and corolla (petals) and numerous stamens. The sepals and petals number either 4 or 5 or have united to form a cap over the flower (as with the eucalypts). It is these numerous stamens that give many of the Myrtaceae species their 'fluffy' look. The fruit is usually a berry or capsule. The leaves generally contain oil glands.

The 'Western Reserve' at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary has been extensively planted with Australian natives by the grounds staff. These natives are not only attractive, but many are edible or bird attracting also. The 'Bush Tucker Garden' contains a great number of plants which are medicinal, edible or used for flavouring teas and cooking. Many of the natives in the Bush Tucker Garden are part of family Myrtaceae, as are a large number of plants on the western reserve.



AIM

- At the end of this exercise you should be able to determine which plants belong to the Myrtaceae family by looking at their general features.
- You will be able to identify some of the more common members of this family.

EQUIPMENT

- Sunscreen and Hat
- Mosquito repellent
- Water Bottle
- Clipboard folder
- Notepad, pen and pencil
- Reference books of Australian native flora

PROCEDURE

- You are to walk around on the western side of the park and determine which plants belong to the family Myrtaceae. There are approximately 140 different genera in this family. Today you will identify 9 genera and 14 different species.
- The next step is to identify specific family members using the **key** provided. The plants which are to be identified are marked by the letters a – m and are all on the western side of the park.
- Work through the key until you have the common and scientific names for the plants a-m.
- Enter the names into the spaces provided on your worksheet

Plant Classification Exercise

Using the key provided, identify the following plants, placing their common name and scientific name in the space provided.

	Common Name	Scientific Name
A	_____	_____
B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____
D	_____	_____
E	_____	_____
F	_____	_____
G	_____	_____
H	_____	_____
I	_____	_____
J	_____	_____
K	_____	_____
L	_____	_____
M	_____	_____

Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary
Key to the plants of the Family Myrtaceae

- 1a** Bark soft, fibrous and spongy; peeling off in large strips.....go to 2
1b Bark not soft and spongygo to 4
- 2a** Leaves small, pointed and 'sharp'.....**Melaleuca stypheloides**
2b Leaves not small and 'sharp'go to 3
- 3a** Leaves long and narrow, growing to 10 cm in length....**Melaleuca leucadendron**
3b Trees usually found close to water.....**Melaleuca quinquinervia**
 (Host to a parasitic fig)
- 4a** Trunk has a stocking of dark bark which peels towards the top; bark at the top is creamy to white.....**Eucalyptus pilularis**
4b Trunk has no stocking of bark.....go to 5
- 5a** Bark is very smooth and pinkish in colour.....**Corymbia citriodora**
5b Bark is not pinkish.....go to 6
- 6a** Bark is grey with obvious ridges; leaves glossy, green and with a pointed tip.....
**Metrosideros queenslandica**
6b Bark is not grey and ridged; leaves not glossy and green.....go to 7
- 7a** Bark is brown and flaky, alternate leaves narrow, up to 5cm
**Leptospermum petersonii**
7b Bark not brown and flaky.....go to 8
- 8a** Bark is brown and smooth; leaves opposite and strongly scented.....go to 9
8b Bark is not brown and smooth.....go to 11
- 9a** A crushed leaf gives off a lemon scent.....**Backhousia citriodora**
9b A crushed leaf does not give off a lemon scent.....go to 10
- 10a** A crushed leaf gives off aniseed scent.....**Backhousia anisata**
10b A crushed leaf gives off cinnamon scent.....**Backhousia myrtifolia**

- 11a** Bark is furrowed and grey; leaves narrow and pointed.....**Callistemon spp.**
- 11b** Bark not furrowed and grey.....go to 12
- 12a** Leaves glossy dark green; immature leaves lighter.....go to 13
- 12b** Leaves opposite, hanging downward; lack of a bud cap in the flower
.....**Angophora spp.**
- 13a** Mature leaf up to 5cm; flower with 4 cream petals and 4 pink sepals
.....**Syzygium paniculatum**
- 13b** Mature leaf size may be greater than 5 cm.....go to 14
- 14a** Mature leaf up to 15cm; bell-shaped flower buds.....**Syzygium oleosum**
- 14b** Mature leaf narrow, pointed and up to 7cm.....**Syzygium luehmannii**