Syzygium paniculatum Banks ex Gaerta

Myrtaceae

LOCAL NAMES
English (creek lilly pilly,pocket-less brush cherry,Monterey bay brush cherry,magenta lilly pilly,brush cherry,scrub cherry,magenta cherry)

BOTANIC DESCRIPTION
S. paniculatum is usually a short to medium sized tree up to 10 m tall, and sometimes a shrub or bush with a flaky bark.

Leaves opposite (each pair emerges from the stem at the same location but on opposite sides), lance-shaped or elliptical in shape and bright, glossy green. The young leaves have an attractive bronze-red tinge.

Flowers white, fluffy, pretty and showy appearing in spring and summer

Fruit an ovoid fleshy, ovoid in shape and about 20 mm long with a large seed. The cherry sized fruit with a crispy flesh surrounding a pea sized seed can be pink, red and sometimes purple or magenta-colored. They are particularly pretty when ripening.

BIOLOGY
Under laboratory conditions, it has been found to have a generalized pollination strategy, exhibiting both self pollination and out crossing. It produces very pretty, showy flowers during spring and summer followed by fruit ripening 2 – 3 months later. In summer flowering occurs in November to February with fruits maturing in May in Australia. Two distinct flashes in flowering rather than a continuous flowering period have been reported in the Gosford-Wyong Region of Australia. Bud development takes approximately one month.

Fruits - taken at Mount Annan Botanic Gardens NSW (Fagg, M. ANBG Photo No.: a.9871)

ECOLOGY
Brush cherry thrives in rain forests and sandy soils by the sea. In Florida it grows well on limestone soils as an under-storey plant. However, it is perfectly adapted to more open, sunny locations where it flourishes with little care once established. It prefers rich soil and assured moisture.

Brush cherry is listed as vulnerable under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999 (i.e. facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the medium term future, as determined in accordance with the prescribed criteria). It is also listed as a vulnerable species on schedule 2 of the New South Wales Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 (TSC Act).

BIOPHYSICAL LIMITS
Temperature: tolerates temperatures down to about -3°C but can grow in a range of a min of 8°C to a max of 32 - 34°C
Rainfall: prefers assured moisture all year round
Soil type: medium to heavy, salt tolerant of coastal conditions, sandy, loam and clay soils

DOCUMENTED SPECIES DISTRIBUTION

Native: Australia
Exotic:

The map above shows countries where the species has been planted. It does neither suggest that the species can be planted in every ecological zone within that country, nor that the species can not be planted in other countries than those depicted. Since some tree species are invasive, you need to follow biosafety procedures that apply to your planting site.

PRODUCTS
Food: The large purple fruits are eaten by birds and are also suited for human consumption and are often made into jams. They are eaten fresh, although the crispy flesh has little taste. It is occasionally used to make preserves.

SERVICES
Boundary or barrier or support:: The most common use of Brush cherry is for a tall screen or live fencing and landscaping especially in the frost-free areas of California and Florida due to its small leaves, year-round growth and a natural compact habit. It is also suited for espalier or topiary.

Shade or shelter: Its ability to tolerate drought and nice foliage make it a nice addition to a deck or patio when planted in a container to create shade.

TREE MANAGEMENT
Brush cherry trees can be trained in the nursery to one central trunk or allowed and encouraged to develop multiple trunks as plants age. Streets and parking lots trees are often specified to have one trunk to allow for vehicle clearance beneath the crown. Multiple trunked trees are often specified for specimen planting so the beautiful bark can be displayed. Stocking rate is recommended at 0.5 – 1 m and 1.5 – 2 m.

GERMPLASM MANAGEMENT
Bush cherry seeds are recalcitrant. The lowest safe moisture content (critical moisture content) below which viability is significantly reduced by further desiccation is 52.4%. Viability can be maintained for 2 – 6 months with partially dried seeds at 5˚C.

PESTS AND DISEASES
Scales, mealy bug, Caribbean fruit fly (Anastrepha suspense), aphids, red spider and mites can infest the foliage and twigs but no serious pests on the plant. Psyllids limit the tree's usefulness in parts of California

FURTHER READNG

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SUGGESTED CITATION

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