

# Bottlebrush

Scientific name: *Callistemon* sp.

Aboriginal name: Birdak (Noongar)



Plant habit



Flower



Flower bud



Fruiting capsules

## About ...

There are about 20 *Callistemon* species native to Australia with only two of these native to Western Australia, *C. glaucus* and *C. phoeniceus*. *C. phoeniceus* is called 'Birdak' by the Noongar people.

They mainly grow along creeks because they need plenty of water. Even though they like water, most species are frost and drought tolerant. They are closely related to paperbarks (melaleucas) which like to have their feet wet for part of the year.

The flowers can be spectacular and are very appealing to nectar-feeding birds and insects.

Botanist, Joseph Banks, introduced the Crimson Bottlebrush (*Callistemon citrinus*) to Britain in 1789. Soon after this, the bottlebrush become a very popular garden plant. It is an easy care and hardy plant, making it very easy to look after in any home garden.

<b>Family</b>	MYRTACEAE
<b>Climate</b>	Tropical to temperate
<b>Habitat</b>	Damp or wet conditions along creek beds or in areas which are prone to floods
<b>Form</b>	Shrub or small tree Height: 0.5 m – 4 m
<b>Foliage</b>	Long, narrow mid-to-dark green leaves Very tough and can be spiky
<b>Flower</b>	Kambarang to Bunuru (Spring and Summer) Dense cylindrical spikes or brushes made up of many individual flowers Pollen forms on the tip of the long coloured stalks Colours include red, pink, white, yellow and mauve
<b>Fruit</b>	Each flower produces a small woody fruit containing hundreds of tiny seeds Form in clusters along the stem The seeds are usually not released from the fruits for several years, but in some species the fruits open after about a year

## Aboriginal Uses

- Flowers are sucked for their nectar
- Flowers can also be made into a sweet drink when soaked in water

Developed by SERCUL for use with the *Bush Tucker Education Program*.



Used as food



Used as medicine



Used as resources



Local to SW WA

**Caution:** Do not prepare bush tucker food without having been shown by Indigenous or experienced persons. Some bush tucker if eaten in large quantities or not prepared correctly can cause illness.