

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.

Family

MYRTACEAE

Climate

Tropical to temperate

Habitat

Damp or wet conditions along creek beds or in areas which are prone to floods

Form

Shrub or small tree
Height: 0.5 m – 4 m

Foliage

Long, narrow mid-to-dark green leaves
Very tough and can be spiky

Flower

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

Fruit

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



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.