

Weeping Bottlebrush

Melaleuca viminalis, Callistemon viminalis

Classified as part of the Myrtaceae family, this Australian native shrub is extremely adaptable and resilient. As well as providing nectar for many species of animals, it is also extremely valuable in controlling erosion along our waterways. Planting of weeping bottlebrush along river and creek banks will provide resistance against strong water currents and can mitigate damage caused by extreme weather events such as flooding.

The weeping bottlebrush reaches heights of up to 5m-8m high and a width of up to 3m. The bark is dark grey in colour and furrowed. Leaves are evergreen and alternate and measure around 10cm long and 12mm wide. Weeping bottlebrush's are generally noted for their flowers which are red and spike to 10cm in spring to summer and feature multiple, long bristle-like stamens. In the absence of flowers shrubs contains woody seed capsule.

Distributions occur naturally along the east coast of Australia and are more common along watercourses. They have adapted to cope with fluctuating water levels and contain matted root systems which bind the soil together strengthening the banks.

It is important that plants such as the weeping bottlebrush are protected and planted along our watercourses. Vegetation such as this will assist in the healthy functioning of our rivers and creeks by:

- improving water quality
- controlling erosion and sediment levels
- providing shade and shelter
- increasing the diversity of pollination animals to the region

<http://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/gnp12/callistemon-viminalis.html>

http://www.nrm.qld.gov.au/waterwise/plantselector/details.php?plant_id=996

<http://www.nrm.qld.gov.au/factsheets/pdf/river/r31.pdf>

Leiper G, Glazebrook J, Cox D, Rathie, K 2008, *Mangroves to Mountains, A Field Guide to the Native Plants of South-east Queensland (revised edition)*, Society for Growing Australian Plants Inc. Queensland.