

Syzygium smithii

COMMON NAME

lilly pilly, monkey apple

SYNONYMS

Acmena smithii, *Eugenia smithii*

FAMILY

Myrtaceae

AUTHORITY

Syzygium smithii (Poir.) Nied.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

SYZSMI

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

HABITAT

Terrestrial.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Tree (6-15 m high in cultivation). Lvs very aromatic when crushed; petiole usually c. 5mm long. Lamina 4-12-(15) x 2-5-(8) cm, ovate or elliptic-ovate, coriaceous, glossy above, dotted with glands below; veins parallel and prominent below; base cuneate or narrow-cuneate; apex obtusely cuspidate or acuminate. Fls shortly pedicellate. Hypanthium (including pseudopedicel) 3-5 mm long; calyx lobes 4, deciduous. Petals 4, c. 2mm long, forming a small calyptrum, whitish. Stamens to c.3mm long whitish. Fr. subglobose to broad-oblong or obovoid, often slightly flattened, usually 1-1.7-(3) cm diam., pinkish mauve or white, with apical cavity. Seed large. (Webb et. al. 1988).

MANAAKI WHENUA ONLINE INTERACTIVE KEY

[Key to the Myrtaceae of New Zealand](#)

SIMILAR TAXA

Syzygium paniculatum, *S. australe* both have more showy flowers with larger petals and stamens; their fruits are ovoid with somewhat swollen sepals at the fruit tips (*S. smithii* has almost spherical fruit with a 'hole' at the distal end.) Leaves of *S. smithii* are broader in relation to their length than those of *S. paniculatum* and *S. australe*. *S. floribunda* has weeping branches and leafy twigs and its leaves are narrow-ovate.

FLOWERING

October, November, December, January

FLOWER COLOURS

Cream, White

LIFE CYCLE

Perennial. Long-lived plant. Birds, dispersed by kereru from townships, farms and orchard hedges (DoC, 1996).



Syzygium smithii. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Syzygium smithii. Photographer: Richard Hursthouse, Licence: CC BY.

THREATS

This taxon may be prone to Myrtle Rust (*Austropuccinia psidii*) is an invasive fungus which threatens myrtle species - learn more myrtlerust.org.nz

YEAR NATURALISED

1982

ORIGIN

E. Australia - was, until recently, known as *Acmena smithii*

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

TOLERANCES

Able to establish in existing forest under low light conditions (DoC, 1996).

ETYMOLOGY

syzygium: From the Greek syzygos 'joined', referring to the paired leaves

smithii: James Edward Smith (1757-1858), who gave it the illegitimate homonymous name *Eugenia elliptica*

NATIONAL PEST PLANT ACCORD SPECIES

This plant is listed in the 2020 National Pest Plant Accord. The National Pest Plant Accord (NPPA) is an agreement to prevent the sale and/or distribution of specified pest plants where either formal or casual horticultural trade is the most significant way of spreading the plant in New Zealand. For up to date information and an electronic copy of the 2020 Pest Plant Accord manual (including plant information and images) visit the [MPI website](#).

MYRTLE RUST

Affected by Myrtle Rust (*Austropuccinia psidii*), an invasive fungus which also threatens native myrtle species.

Learn more myrtlerust.org.nz

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Gardner, R. 2009. Monkey-apples: the fruit and seed of two *Syzygium* spp. (Myrtaceae). *Auckland Botanical Society Journal*, 64(1): 75-76

[Syzygium smithii - Wikipedia](#)

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

Please cite as: Ogle, C. (Year at time of access): *Syzygium smithii* Fact Sheet (content continuously updated). New Zealand Plant Conservation Network. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/syzygium-smithii/> (Date website was queried)

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/syzygium-smithii/>