

Friday, March 1, 2024

Melaleuca citrina

Scientific name: *Melaleuca citrina* (Curtis) Dum.Cours.

Family: *Myrtaceae*

Common name: Crimson bottlebrush, scarlet bottlebrush, lemon bottlebrush

Formerly known as *Callistemon citrinus*, it is a small evergreen tree growing to a height of around 3 metres, native to eastern Australia.

The flowering of this bottlebrush is very striking, due to the intense scarlet red colour of the stamens. The shoots are silky. The flowers appear in spring and last until summer; they are grouped in

spike-shaped inflorescences of around 10 centimetres, situated at the ends of the branches. The bark of the trunk is fibrous. The leaves are very distinctive, very thin and with a pointed tip. They have glands which, when rubbed, give off a citrus scent, like lemon, hence the species' name. The genus name derives from the Greek words *melas* (black) and *leukos* (white), referring to the black trunk and white shoots of some species.

This species contains various compounds with anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties. It is a superb ornamental species, very hardy and adaptable; however, it must be planted in full sun. In La Concepción, the 'Splendens' cultivar is found, which is denser and more compact, and has more intense flowering. It can be seen crowning a slope behind the arches with climbing plants in the Garden of the Senses.

