River Tea Tree

Melaleuca quinquenervia

Height: 40 feet

Spread: 30 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 8

Other Names: Paperbark Tree, White Bottlebrush Tree

Description:

This fast growing tree thrives in moist wetlands, with poor drainage but also tolerates drier soils; creamy white bottlebrush flowers in summer and fall; considered invasive in some areas as seeds are spread by wind and water

Ornamental Features

River Tea Tree features showy clusters of creamy white frilly flowers at the ends of the branches from late spring to mid fall. It has attractive green evergreen foliage. The small narrow leaves are highly ornamental and remain green throughout the winter. However, the fruit can be messy in the landscape and may require occasional clean-up. The peeling tan bark is extremely showy and adds significant winter interest.

Landscape Attributes

River Tea Tree is an evergreen tree with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other landscape plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance tree, and should only be pruned after flowering to avoid removing any of the current season's flowers. It is a good choice for attracting bees and hummingbirds to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;



River Tea Tree bark
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



River Tea Tree
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

- Invasive
- Self-Seeding

River Tea Tree is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens



River Tea Tree flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

River Tea Tree will grow to be about 40 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 30 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 6 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. As it matures, the lower branches of this tree can be strategically removed to create a high enough canopy to support unobstructed human traffic underneath. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 60 years or more.

This tree does best in full sun to partial shade. It is quite adaptable, prefering to grow in average to wet conditions, and will even tolerate some standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type or pH, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is not originally from North America.