



Brush Box



From rainforest to urban street



The Brush Box is commonly and successfully used as a street tree in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and other cities in eastern Australia due to its hardiness, with resilience to disease and pests, high tolerance for poor conditions, and limited need for upkeep.

Often preferred to eucalypts because it provides better shade, and is safer as it rarely sheds limbs, it does need lopping under overhead power lines, but handles pruning well.

Uses

Hardwood timber that has a fine and even texture with an interlocking grain and good resistance to wear and splintering, that suits appearance-based applications such as flooring, cladding and panelling. It can distort during drying, and has poor workability.

Family: *Myrtaceae*

Genus: *Lophostemon*

Botanic name: *Lophostemon confertus*

lophos - crest, *stemon* – stamen; *confertus* is Latin for crowded together perhaps referring to the leaves

Also known as: Brush Box, Queensland Box, Brisbane Box, Pink Box, Box Scrub, and Vinegar Tree

Origin: Australia. The natural range is north-east New South Wales from the Hunter Valley, and coastal Queensland.

Habitat: Its natural habitat ranges from moist open forest and rainforest margins, where it can reach heights of 30m or more, to coastal headlands where it forms a stunted, wind-sheared habit. Altitudinal range in North Queensland is from 150-850m.



Description: A large fast growing tree with a dome-like shape, it has a dense foliage with dark green, leathery leaves about 7-15 x 2.5-4.5 cm, crowded together in groups of 3-5 at the ends of twigs.

Conspicuous vegetative buds generally terminating the twigs. Young shoots clothed in pale, prostrate, silky hairs; produce a milky exudate when broken.



Fruit is bell-shaped with three valves about 10-15mm diam., included in the calyx tube (hypanthium). Seeds linear, about 2-3 mm long. Seed germination time 4 to 14 days.

It has rough brown bark on lower trunk and smooth pinkish brown bark on upper trunk and branches.

In summer it has clusters of small white flowers whose stamens give them a decorative fluffy appearance.



Flowers attract bees and nectar-eating birds.

It is also a food plant for the larval stages of butterflies such as the Common Red-eye, Rare Red-eye and Eastern Flat.



Propagation and cultivation: Available from nurseries, where every stage from propagation onwards requires management of root division to avoid girdling or circling roots.

Sources:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lophostemon_confertus
- <http://www.anbg.gov.au/>
- <https://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=sp&name=Lophostemon%7Econfertus>
- <https://bie.ala.org.au/species/https://id.biodiversity.org.au/node/apni/2908951>
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