

Summer: What's flowering now?



Lemon Scented Myrtle

Lemon Scented Myrtle *Backhousia citriodora*

This is a most useful plant to grow in your backyard! The Lemon Scented Myrtle is an east coast native, found in the Mackay & the Whitsunday region predominantly on offshore islands. The leaves exude a rich, lemon fragrance when crushed and can be dried and used for cooking – sprinkled on for lemon flavor, steeped in oil or simply added to boiling water to make a refreshing tea.

Now coming into full flower, bees and honey-eaters will flock to the cream coloured summer blooms. They smell deliciously like sweet honey and nectar, covering part of, or the entire plant.

Lemon Scented Myrtle prefers partial shade when young but will flower better in full sun and can be kept pruned as a compact shrub. It's excellent as a semi formal hedge, as an individual garden specimen or let grow to its full height as a large shrub - still suitable for small backyards. Plant in rich soil with plenty of mulch to keep up a steady supply of moisture. You can see Lemon Scented Myrtle in flower now near the Japan Garden, Malta Garden & the Regional Flora Terraces of the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens.

Pink Shower, Java Shower Tree *Cassia javanica*

This stunning shade tree is just coming into its best now with a



Pink Shower

mass of rich pink blooms held above a canopy of lush green leaves from spring into summer - with the odd spot flower appearing through until autumn. The Pink Shower Tree is a native of South East Asia and best suits the tropics and sub-tropics as far south as coastal central NSW.

This tree is deciduous (especially when cool and dry conditions prevail) and large amounts of the long brown seed pods hang on the tree most of the year. The pods when crushed (and to some extent the flowers) emit a decidedly unpleasant marzipan odour. Look out for a new cultivar "Rainbow Showers" - a cross with the yellow flowering *Cassia fistula* - with stunning pink and white pendulous blooms and no seed pods.

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Throughout summer - this is a beautiful shade tree with a graceful, weeping habit and suits larger backyards - but does not have the same notoriously vigorous buttress root systems like Poincianas. Pink Shower Tree grows easily and regularly from seed and is available at most nurseries. You'll find the Pink Shower Tree just below the Garden's Café and Lagoon Lookout Decks.

Flame Tree

Brachychiton acerifolius

This stunning tree puts on a spring and early summer show of vivid red flowers and bracts, that may appear on a tree that



Flame Tree

is leafless, partially leaved or in full leaf - based on the amount of winter and spring rain received. The smooth bark, maple-like leaves and attractive pyramid shape makes this tree an attractive backyard or footpath specimen even when not in flower.

The Flame Tree is found naturally down the east coast into NSW. The tree can handle almost all weather conditions of mainland Australia except prolonged winter cold and snow. Flame trees can be seen next to the Brigalow Garden, near the Turf Trial Plots and along the lagoon edge near the Japan Garden in the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens.

Brown Kurrajong

Commersonia bartramia

Often called "Snow in Summer" this delightful small tree is fast growing and suitable for the average backyard.

A feature of this tree is the mass of creamy flowers borne from December to March, followed by chestnut-like spiky seed capsules. Sporadic flowering also occurs most of the year.

Usually found along creek lines, Brown Kurrajong prefers a moist position in full sun or partial shade. Renowned for speedy growth, it's not unusual for these



Brown Kurrajong

trees to grow several metres in their first year. They will usually only grow to 10 metres full height. Use this tree to obtain an almost instant canopy or windbreak - but due to their fast growth, these trees are often 'at their best' for the first 10 years of their life.

You'll find the Brown Kurrajong in many sections of the gardens including the Tropical Shade Garden, Finch Hatton Gorge Waterway Garden, Buffer Forest & Regional Forest Gardens of the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens.

For more information
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