



KANUKA

Maori name: Kanuka
Common name: Tea Tree
Botanical name: *Kunzea ericoides*

What does it look like?

Kanuka grows into an erect tree of up to 15 metres tall with long strips of loose, papery bark and small leaves that feel silky when young. Clusters of small white flowers appear from September to February.

Where does it grow?

Kanuka is common throughout lowland and mountain scrub and along forest margins in the North and South Islands, from sea level to 900 metres. It grows well on all soil types except water-logged soils, and is tolerant of wind, drought and frost.

Used to ...

Like its relation manuka, kanuka's hard red wood was widely used by Maori for anything from paddles, weapons, spade blades, weeders, bird spears, mauls to house building. The bark was used for making water containers and the inner bark as a waterproof layer for roofing. Kanuka is also a first class firewood and was also used by early settlers for tool handles and fencing. Like manuka, kanuka oil was used by Maori and is now sold in New Zealand and other countries as Teatree oil for its anti-worm, antibacterial and insecticidal properties. Maori also used pounded kanuka seed capsules to make a poultice (dressing) for running sores.

Did you know . . . ?

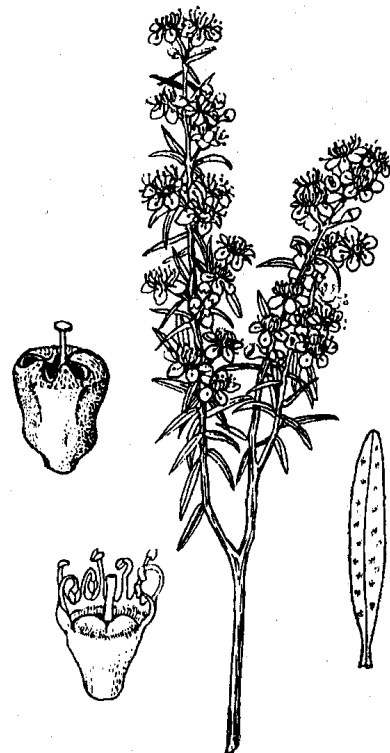
Kanuka looks very similar to manuka, but can grow into a bigger tree. You can tell the difference between them by the leaves - kanuka leaves are much softer to touch and the small white kanuka flowers grow in clusters, not singly, like the manuka. Not affected by the manuka blight, kanuka bark does not have a "sooty" look. Until recently, it was thought that manuka and kanuka were the same genus (group of species), but they are now recognised as belonging to different ones. Kanuka is also found in eastern Australia and its oil is harvested there, too.

Growing tips . . . in your plant growing unit

Kanuka is easy to grow, but the seedlings may need potting on from the root trainers.

Planting out for soil conservation

Kanuka can be established in a new area by the "seed-bearing slash" method, or pegging down a layer of seed-bearing branches onto the soil. Layers should be 30-40 cm deep and cover the soil enough to provide 80-95% shade. Seedlings will soon germinate within the cover of the slash from the seeds it contains. This method makes kanuka very good for revegetating bare eroded surfaces. Like manuka, kanuka is an important pioneering or colonising native shrub because it prefers direct sunlight, so it provides good shelter for young native trees and acts as a nursery for them.



Picture from Lindsay Poole and Nancy Adams, 1990, *Trees and Shrubs of New Zealand*, DSIR Publishing.

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