FLORA
OF AUSTRALIA

Ericomyrtus Turcz.

ALA (https://bie.ala.org.au/species/https://id.biodiversity.org.au/taxon/apni/51311137) NSL [legitimate] (https://biodiversity.org.au/nsl/services/apni-format/display/113006)

Options

— Turczaninow, P.K.N.S. (1847), Decas tertia generum adhuc non descriptorum, adjectis descriptionibus nonnullarum specierum Myrtacearum xerocarpicarum atque Umbelliferarum imperfectarum. *Bulletin de la Societe Imperiale des Naturalistes de Moscou* 20(1): 154

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Nomenclature

Turczaninow, P.K.N.S. (1847), Decas tertia generum adhuc non descriptorum, adjectis descriptionibus nonnullarum specierum Myrtacearum xerocarpicarum atque Umbelliferarum imperfectarum. *Bulletin de la Societe Imperiale des Naturalistes de Moscou* 20(1): 154 ()

Etymology

Probably from the genus *Erica* L. (Greek *erike*: heather, Ericaceae) and *myrtos* (myrtle), for its small shrubby habit with small leaves.

Description

Small to medium shrubs to 2 m high, glabrous, single-stemmed or multi-branched at the base. Leaves opposite, decussate, sessile or shortly petiolate, small, entire; apex somewhat incurved, not or scarcely mucronate. Peduncles solitary in the axils, 1-flowered. Bracteoles opposite, persistent, rather leaf-like but more keeled. Pedicels usually shorter than the peduncles. Flowers actinomorphic. Hypanthium broader than long, adnate to the ovary for most of its length, densely dotted with oil glands, green on the adnate part, reddish on the free part. Sepals 5, much shorter than the petals, entire, often somewhat keeled, persistent in fruit. Petals 5, widely spreading in flower, 1.7–4 mm long, white or pale pink, often with a dark pink to red blotch on the outermost petal where it is exposed in bud, shed in fruit; antipetalous colleters minute or absent. Staminodes absent. Stamens inflexed in bud, 10–23, in antisepalous groups, the marginal ones of each group largest, often incurved at end of filament but not geniculate, much shorter than the petals. Filaments free, narrow. Anthers small, with

the thecae and connective gland fused into a 3-lobed or transversely subreniform structure, opening by two long pores or short slits that diverge basally. Ovary inferior, 3-locular, densely dotted with oil glands on summit; placentas ± sessile; ovules 12–21 per loculus, radially arranged. Style with base deeply inset into a cylindrical depression in the ovary summit. Fruits inferior, 3-valvate, multi-seeded, with a flat or shallowly convex summit; hypanthium ± cup-shaped or urceolate. Seeds strongly facetted, wedge-shaped, 0.45–1.2 mm long; testa crustaceous, smooth, pale to dark brown.

Diagnostic Features

Distinguished by the following combination of characters: peduncles 1-flowered; anthers small, compact, with connective gland obscure; ovary 3-locular, with 12–21 ovules on each sessile placenta, never regularly 12; fruits dehiscent by 3 valves. Unusual in having all or most species tetraploid.

Phenology

Flowers primarily in spring.

Chromosome Numbers

Possibly constant on the tetraploid number of *n* = 22.

Biostatus

Native.

Distribution

A genus of 4 species in the southwest of Western Australia, extending southeast from Yuna to south of Balladonia.

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Ecology

Across the wheatbelt of southwestern Australia, *Ericomyrtus* is able to thrive in a wide range of soil types and is the most commonly encountered genus of subtribe Hysterobaeckeinae. Flowers have readily accessible nectar and attract varied small insects. The significance to pollination of the red style and large peltate stigma found in most species is unknown.

Nomenclature and Typification

Ericomyrtus Turcz., *Bulletin de la Classe Physico-Mathématique de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de Saint-Pétersbourg* 20(1): 154–155 (1847). Type: *Ericomyrtus drummondii* Turcz. [as *drumondii*].

Taxonomic Notes

Molecular evidence suggests that *Ericomyrtus* is closely related to *Cheyniana* Rye (Rye *et al.* 2020), another genus with very reduced anthers. *Ericomyrtus drummondii* has very short stamens and a green style with a small, capitate stigma, whereas allied species from the *E. serpyllifolia* complex have longer stamens and a longer, red style with a large, peltate stigma.

Illustrations

B.L. Rye, *Nuytsia* 25: 140, fig. 2 (2015), https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/60020865 (https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/60020865).

Excluded or Uncertain Names

Ericomyrtus sp. Mt Lesueur (E.A. Griffin 2325) (Western Australian Herbarium 1998–) is a taxonomically unresolved variant from the *E. serpyllifolia* complex.

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Source

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Taxonomy

- Kingdom: Plantae ()
- Phylum: Charophyta
- Class: Equisetopsida
- Subclass: Magnoliidae
- Superorder: Rosanae ()
- Order: Myrtales ()
- Family: Myrtaceae (/opus/foa/profile/Myrtaceae) ()
- Genus: Ericomyrtus (/opus/foa/profile/Ericomyrtus) ()

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Ericomyrtus tenuior by Thiele, K.R., 27/08/2011 (© Thiele, K.R.)

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