

Buckinghamia celcissima 'Ivory Curl Tree'



For a hobbyist, local garden plants and street trees – our urban forest – can be significant food sources. Many of these species aren't mentioned in honey flora books, probably because in the wild they don't occur in large stands. Some of the most notable bee trees in our suburb are Poinciana, Mango and Ivory curl tree.

Family: Australian Natives - Proteaceae

Genus: Buckinghamia

Species 'Var': celcissima

Common Name: 'Ivory Curl Tree'

Derivation of Name: *Buckinghamia*....after Richard Grenville, Duke of Buckingham.

celcissima....from Latin *celsus*, high or lofty, a reference to the habit of the plant in the wild.

Australian plants

Nectar-rich

plants such as Australian natives are low allergen. Most have sweet honey-filled flowers such as banksia, bottlebrush, firewheel tree (*Stenocarpus sinuatus*), grevillea, ivory curl tree (*Buckinghamia celsissima*), tea tree and even grass trees (*Xanthorrea australis*) have long, nectar-filled flowers that birds love. The dwarf flowering gums are perfect trees for small gardens as they are nectar-rich and attract birds. The exception to the 'plant Australian' rule is grevillea 'Robyn Gordon' as these flowers irritate the skin of most people.

Quick Facts:

Fast-growing

evergreen, Australian Native tree grown for striking and long floral display. Rough, brown bark, and bushy growth to ground level. Long leaves, shiny and light green above, velvety beneath. New leaves are tinged red or pink. Long, sweetly fragrant, cream-white flowers from spring to autumn. Suits most soil types. Prefers moist well drained soil in full sun to semi-shade. Shade tolerant. Frost tolerant when established.

Height: 6m

Width: 2m

Flowers:

Fragrant creamy-white flowers

B.celsissima is a tall tree to 30 metres in height in its natural habitat but is much smaller in cultivation, particularly in cooler climates where it rarely exceeds 7-8 metres. It has attractive foliage - the juvenile leaves are often lobed while the new growth is an attractive bronze colour. Mature leaves are elliptical and entire and about 150 mm long. Flowers are white to cream and occur in summer in large racemes up to 200 mm long. The flowers are well displayed at the ends of the branches.

The ivory curl plant performs well in cultivation even in much cooler areas to its natural habitat. Good specimens can be found in Sydney and Melbourne. It requires a reasonably well drained, moist soil and a sunny position.

Propagation

is reasonably easy from seed which should be sown when fresh. Cuttings of hardened, current season's growth are also successful.

Apiculture

Vasse (2011, pers. com.) reports that in north

Queensland the bees 'hammer' ivory curl through spring, building well on it. It produces good pollen and a light mild-flavoured honey, possibly similar to macadamia.