

Bottle Brush, *furshat az zujaj*

The Bottle Brush, or furshat az zujaj in Arabic, is named for its spikes of crimson flowers that appear in spring and summer. Inflorescences with no petals, but instead spikes of bright stamens, radiate from the twig's end, where they attract butterflies. This native of eastern Australia grows as a spreading, evergreen shrub that may be trained into a small tree. Without pruning, it may reach a height of 5 metres and almost the same width. Its lance-shaped stiff foliage grows upward and exudes a scent of citrus when crushed. Young leaves are copper-coloured and turn deep green as they mature. The fruits are pea-sized, woody capsules that release hundreds of tiny seeds. The bark is grey and much-fissured. Full sun, dry air and some drought are tolerated, but the tree is prone to frost. Flowering is far less profuse in shady locations. Alkaline soils and even flooding are tolerated, owing to the plant's origin on riverbanks. High soil salinity results in chlorosis that may be cured by applying iron chelate. Pruning should not be hard, and care should be taken in shaping and trimming. Propagation is easy by seeds or cuttings. Cultivars vary in colour, shape and size: 'Jeffers' grows more compact with magenta flowers, while 'Splendens' is an improved selection with red flowers. Other colours are shown by 'Violaceus', 'Mauve Mist' and 'Perth Pink'. Bottle Brushes do well in containers, as specimens or grouped. They make a good screen and serve well as flowering hedges.



GENERAL

Origin	: Mediterranean, sub-tropical
Vigour	: fairly fast growing
Humidity	: semi-arid, semi-humid, very humid
Propagation	: sowing and pricking out, cuttings
Maintenance	: moderate

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: resistant
Stagnant water	: resistant
Irrigation	: medium
Salinity/ppm	: moderate (2500 ppm)
Hardiness	: -3°C

SHAPE

Type	: shrub, tree
Height	: 2 m-5 m
Spread	: 3 m-4 m
Foliage	: evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	: bright red
Size	: 5 cm - 15 cm
Period	: May - September
Smell	: aroma, weak, leaf

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: capsule
Fruit size	: 0.7 cm