

Indigenous Plants for Ballarat Gardens



Photograph: Roger Thomas

Prickly Tea-tree

Leptospermum continentale

FAST FACTS

Shrub

Family:	Myrtaceae
	Myrtle
Size:	1.5m H x 50cm W
Position:	Sunny
Soil:	Well drained
Flowers:	Spring
Fruits:	Woody capsules
Care:	Light prune

An Australian native shrub from the Ballarat area, **Prickly Tea-tree** (*Leptospermum continentale*) can be quite variable in size depending on how much water it receives.

Location / Leaves: Prickly Tea-tree prefers a sunny position and is best planted in the middle of a garden bed or where people won't brush up against it as the small narrow leaves are quite sharp at the tip.

Flowers: It flowers during spring and can be quite spectacular, with branches almost entirely covered in bright white flowers.

Fruit: The flowers form attractive disc-shaped globular woody fruit that ripen from green to brown over summer. Ripe fruit will remain on the stems for several years.

Care: A light prune after flowering will keep the plant dense and bushy. It will also have more flowers next year. You can leave it

unpruned – it will tend to grow taller but slightly straggly.

Planting: Prickly Tea-tree is quite tough and will grow really well if planted within a few days of purchase in a hole not much larger than the pot. Give it a good ½ bucket of water as soon as you plant it and it should be fine after that.

Propagation: Remove a few of the older dried woody fruit and place in a paper bag somewhere warm. Tiny elongated “dusty” seeds will emerge from the capsules. Sprinkle them onto the top of a small pot and dust with a light coat of fine soil. Keep them well watered and transplant into larger pots when they are a couple of centimetres tall. The young plants can be transferred into the ground when about 10 cm high.