

# Indigenous Plants for Ballarat Gardens



Photograph: Jenny Sedgewick

## Tree Violet

### Melicytus dentatus

#### FAST FACTS

##### Shrub

Family:	Violaceae
	Violet
Size:	3m H x 2m W
Position:	Sunny
Soil:	Moist
Flowers:	Spring
Fruits:	Pale grey-mauve berries
Care:	Moderate maintenance

**Tree Violet** (*Melicytus dentatus*) is a native understorey shrub from the Ballarat region.

**Location:** Grow in a sunny or lightly shaded position in moist soil. Strong needle-like spines between the leaves mean it is best planted away from walkways. Grow several as an attractive hedge and effective security screen.

**Leaves:** Encourage to grow densely with regular pruning. The dense growth habit and long sharp-pointed spines provide excellent shelter and nesting sites for small birds.

**Flowers:** In spring hundreds of pale cream bell-shaped flowers release a beautiful perfume attracting small nectar-feeding birds and butterflies. Flowers are followed by pale grey-mauve succulent berries much favoured by fruit eaters such as lizards, Rosellas and Currawongs.

**Attracts:** Small nectar-feeding birds such as the handsome Eastern Spinebill and several local species of honeyeater, treasure this plant for the food, safe refuge and nesting sites it provides. If you have cats in the area and want to attract honeyeaters to your garden this is the ideal plant.

**Planting:** Plant in a hole not much larger than the pot within a few days of purchase and immediately provide a full bucket of water.

**Care:** Tree Violet is best when grown as a 1.2m x 1m hedge so a regular light prune will keep it compact, encourage dense growth, better shelter and more flowers. Wear gloves to protect your hands when pruning, and remove trimmings to a safe place.

**Propagation:** Grow from seed or cuttings.