

Broad-leafed Paperbark

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Paperbark just about says it all! The papery bark is built up layer upon layer on the trunk and branches, and the five prominent veins along the length of each leaf are indicated in its scientific name *Melaleuca quinquenervia*. In paperbark or tea-tree swamps, trees tend to grow to ten or fifteen metres, but individual specimens in parks may reach greater heights and become magnificent examples.

These trees have tremendous value in flood mitigation and cleansing run-off. Water flowing through the swamps and floodplains is soaked up into the roots, trunks and branches, and impurities are removed before reaching watercourses. The rate of water flow across land is slowed and erosion is controlled.

The leaves are extremely oily and smell strongly when crushed. The Aboriginals used the oils in various ways to relieve headaches and the symptoms of colds and flu, and their associated problems. Leaves were also used in the treatment of wounds and rubbing crushed leaves into the skin repelled biting insects. They also used the prolific cream flowers to make a sweet drink. Blossom normally appears in spring and autumn, but can do so at any season. Birds, Flying-foxes, butterflies and other insects find the flowers a great resource.

The peeled bark of the tree was used by aboriginals to wrap food for cooking in coals, for constructing rain shelters, for canoe repairs, and for bandaging injuries.

