

## *Melaleuca systena*

### COASTAL HONEY-MYRTLE

Craven

**Flowering period:** February–March and August–December.

**Description:** Erect to spreading, bushy shrub to 1.2 m high in coastal areas. Young leaves and stems hairy, leaves scattered, variable from linear to terete, 8–17 mm long, 0.75–1.5 mm wide. Inflorescence a terminal, dense, globular cluster of many flowers comprising bundles of stamens up to 9 mm long often with an oily or musty fragrance. Seeds in small grey, globular capsules 4–5 mm in diameter. Seeds are released when the capsules are dried for 2–4 days. Seeds very fine and mixed with sterile packing material (ovulode).

**Pollination:** Open pollinated by a wide variety of insects seeking nectar held at the base of each flower.

**Distribution:** From Dongara to Walpole and common on limestone and dune areas particularly in heathland in secondary dunes.

**Propagation:** Readily propagated from seed mixed with equal quantities of dry sand and sprinkled evenly over a seed raising mix in trays. Keep moist and seedlings appear in 4–6 weeks. Prick out at the 4–6 leaf stage.

**Uses in restoration:** Exceptional species in coastal restoration programs with its rapid growth, long life expectancy and abundant flowering within two years of planting. Must be grown in full sun with species of similar growth form such as *Olearia axillaris* and *Phyllanthus calycinus*. Avoid exposed sites as the species is particularly susceptible to wind and salt damage. Plant on the leeward side of taller, more protective species. Highly susceptible to attack by native dodder laurels.

**Notes:** A useful smaller shrub for the home garden that produces masses of flowers at various times of the year. Responds to pruning and shaping.



Habit



Flowers



Flowers



Distribution