

# TEA TREE - Manuka

*Leptospermum scoparium*

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Manuka is used as a 'nurse crop' with other early inhabiting plants for revegetation and restoration planting. It is comparatively short lived, (about 60 years) so as the stand approaches this age there is a progressive breakdown of the canopy as individual manuka die. This allows seedlings of other native species to come through.

## Growth form

A shrub growing to 2–5 m tall, but can grow into a moderately sized tree, up to 15 m or so in height. It is evergreen, with dense branches and small leaves 7–20 mm long and 2–6 mm broad, with a sharp tip.

## Flowers

The flowers are white, occasionally pink, 8–15 mm diameter, with five petals. Manuka has hard, woody seed capsules that remain on the plant for a year or more after flowering.

## Health benefits

Manuka honey, produced when honeybees gather the nectar from its flowers, is distinctively flavoured, darker and richer in taste than clover honey and has strong antibacterial and antifungal properties.

Captain Cook used the leaves to make a 'tea' drink.



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