

Plant of the Month - June 2021

by Allan Carr

Calytrix tetragona

Pronunciation: CAL-ee-trix tet-ra-GO-na

Derivation: *Calytrix*, from the Greek, *kalyx* – cup, calyx and *thrix* – hair (referring to the hairs at the ends of the *calyx lobes in the photo on the right below); *tetragona*, *tetra* – four and *gonos* – angled (referring to the fruit).

fringe myrtle
MYRTACEAE



Flowers



Leaves, calyces

Calytrix is an endemic genus of about 100 species distributed throughout Australia with the main concentration in south-west WA. Plants are generally found in heathland areas. The most decorative aspect of some species is the colour of the *calyx after flowering is finished.

Description: This dainty shrub to 2 m x 1 m is a very widespread species found in sandy soils and rocky places in most states from southern Qld to SA including Tas and in south-west WA. It appreciates a semi-shaded or full sun position in well drained soil and faces potential threat from the myrtle rust pathogen *Austropuccinia* sp. but my plants have shown no sign of it yet.

Leaves to 6 mm x 2 mm are alternate and form a fine heath-like foliage on thin lightweight branches that are usually erect but often spreading. These tiny leaves crowded and erect along the stems are often finely toothed or *ciliate and slightly fleshy with a spicy perfume when crushed.

Flowers are open with numerous *stamens, star-shaped and about 15 mm diameter, often forming dense terminal heads. The flowering period is normally August to October but it is flowering sparsely at the present time. After flowering, the calyces (plural of *calyx) hang on for some weeks, shiny and saucer-shaped with long curling threads, turning deep red-brown or purplish.

Fruits are red to brown nuts, with a single seed, enclosed in the lower part of the *persistent *calyx tube.

*calyx = the part of a flower made up of the sepals

*ciliate = fringed with fine soft hairs

*stamen = male organ consisting of a stalk (filament) and a pollen-bearing portion (anther)

*persistent = not shed readily

Habit on Glass House Mountains

