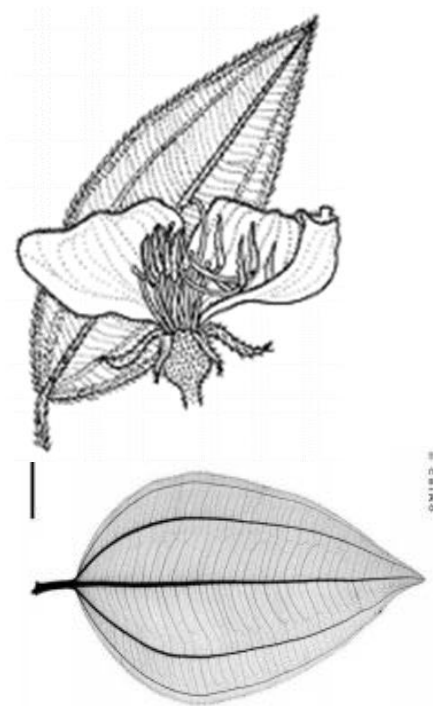


Melastomataceae

Melastoma malabathricum

Old Name *Melastoma affine*

Blue Tongue

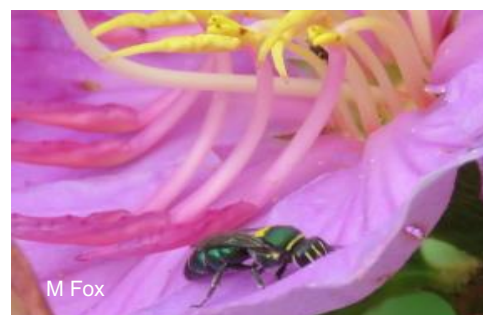


Ann Moran

Field Botanist



Amegilla sp. Blue-banded Bee



Palaeorhiza parallela Masked Bee

ETYMOLOGY

(mel-a-STO-ma) Mela = black Greek stoma = a mouth; The species malabathricum = from Malabar SW India

LIFEFORM

Shrub 50 cm-2 m x 2 m Spread

STATUS

Regionally Significant SE Qld; Found at Helidon Hills disjunct population;

HABITAT

Coastal heaths, Wallum, woodlands, Swamps

TOLERANCES

Full sun to partial shade. Well drained to poorly drained soil

LEAVES

Alternate, 4-12 x 2-4 cm, both sides hairy discolourous with 3 veins prominent underside

FLOWERS

Pale pink, 5 petalled with bright yellow stamens curved in the centre. **Flowering Times:** Jan, Feb, March, April, May, June, July, Aug, Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec

FRUIT

Brown green scaly with inside red-purple pulp **Fruiting Times:** Dec, Jan, Feb, March

BARK

Smooth bark

STEM

Erect stiff stems round, unbranched with short creeping rhizomes

ETHNOBOTANY

Edible fruit, roots and flowers. Fruit colours tongue blue. Ornamental potential usage in landscaping Medicinal decoction of leaves & young shoots drunk to cure diarrhoea. European bees (*Apis mellifera*) are poor pollinators compared with *Trigona carbonaria*

BIRD

Australian Brush turkey, Double-eyed Fig-parrot, Lewin's Honeyeater

BUTTERFLY

Hypochrysops miskini (Coral Jewel)

NATIVE BEE

Amegilla pulchra (Blue-banded Bee) *Palaeorhiza parallela* (Masked Bee), *Trigona carbonaria* (Stingless Native Bee)

MOTH

Gnathothlibus eras (White-brow Hawk Moth)

INDIGENOUS USE

Eat ripe fruit and roots raw

ID FEATURE

Distinctive coarse hairy leaves with 3 veins + Pale pink 5 petalled flowers + brown scaly fruits

COMMENTS

Purplish black pulp eaten by children to show off their blue tongues hence the common name