

Midjim Berry (*Austromyrtus dulcis*)

Common Names: Midyim berry, Midgen berry, Midjim berry

Order: Myrtales

Family: Myrtaceae

Genus: *Austromyrtus*

Species: *dulcis*

Growth Habit: spreading shrub

Height: 0.2-0.7m

Width: 0.8m

Description: dense, bushy, spreading shrub with small, 1-3cm long and 0.5cm wide, lanceolate or elliptical evergreen leaves, that grow in an opposite arrangement along the branches. The leaves are an attractive burgundy colour when young before maturing to a dark, glossy green with silky fine hairs beneath.

Flowers: small (7-10mm across) white flowers with 5 ovate petals and numerous stamens appear in clusters on short branchlets in spring and summer.

Fruit: small berries are up to 1cm across and grey-white in colour with tiny purple/blue-black dots that gives them a mauve or grey appearance. Inside the soft edible skin, the pulp has a mild sweet aroma and sweet tangy flavour with hints of ginger or spice. The seeds are also edible. Fruit appears through to late Autumn and will fall off easily into your hand when ripe. They are best eaten fresh, over vanilla icecream, but can also be made into delicious pies, sauces and preserves.



Location Preferences: its natural habitat is mild rainforest gullies in the coastal areas of northern New South Wales and south-east Queensland, but it will grow in full sun or part shade, growing taller (to 0.5m) and denser in full sun and as a more open ground cover in the shade. It is an adaptable plant, handling a variety of situations, climatic conditions and soil types providing there is good drainage; it will even grow in sandy coastal conditions as long as it has protection from harsh, salt-laden winds. Prefers an acidic soil with a pH of less than 6.5 and will tolerate light frosts and moderate salinity.

Irrigation: prefers adequate moisture. Irrigate during periods of prolonged drought and hot weather. They do not tolerate waterlogging.

Maintenance: responds to light pruning and can be clipped to encourage dense, bushy growth or to form an attractive hedge.

Prepare planting hole with compost and mulch during spring/summer to help maintain soil moisture levels.

Pests and Diseases: no known pests and diseases. However, as a member of the Myrtaceae family, it may be at risk of myrtle rust if this is present in your area. This disease attacks young leaves, shoot tips, young stems, flowers and fruit, causing tiny raised brown-grey, blistery spots. Up to 14 days after infection, the 'rust' (yellow/orange spots) will appear enmasse. If you think that you have myrtle rust on your property, contact authorities in your State or Territory.

References:

Cribb, A.B. and Cribb, J.W. (1990) *Wild Food in Australia*, Sydney: Collins/Angus & Robertson Publishers Australia

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austromyrtus_dulcis