

# Burgan

*Kunzea ericoides* (A.Rich.) Joy Thomps. (Myrtaceae)

## What is it?

*Kunzea ericoides* is an Australian native which occurs naturally in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, and is also native to New Zealand. It was introduced to Tasmania as an ornamental species and has recently been found naturalised in several locations throughout the state, including sites on the east coast, and in the north west and Midlands.

Tasmania is also home to a native species of *Kunzea*, namely *K. ambigua*, which naturally occurs on the east coast of Tasmania from Maria Island extending into the Furneaux group. It is also native to Victoria and New South Wales. *Kunzea ambigua* has been recorded outside of its native range in Tasmania by escaping from areas where it has been used for revegetation.

# WEED PROFILE



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## What does it look like?

*Kunzea ericoides* is an upright to somewhat spreading shrub which can reach a height of up to 3 m. The leaves are small and narrow, each up to 20 mm long and pleasantly aromatic, especially when crushed. The flowers are Leptospermum-like, each having five white orbicular petals which surround a purplish receptacle. The flowers appear from November to February and are crowded on leafy side branches and in upper leaf axils. The fruits, which open by terminal valves, release copious amounts of fine seed in summer.

*Kunzea ericoides* can be distinguished from the native Tasmanian species, *Kunzea ambigua* by using the key below.



Leaves of *Kunzea ericoides*



Flowers of *Kunzea ericoides*

## What is its weed potential?

*Kunzea ericoides* spreads in a manner reminiscent of Spanish heath. However, it does not appear to be as invasive. Most infestations are found forming dense populations, spreading along dry roadside habitats nearby cultivated plants. In Tasmania it is has been recorded as a weed of bushland, roadsides and disturbed sites. The species spreads small distances by seed falling close to parent plants. Distant spread of seed is facilitated by water movement, and by equipment contaminated with seed.

Evidence on the Australian mainland indicates that, although native, it has spread beyond its native range and has even colonized pasture.



*Kunzea ericoides* spreading along a dry roadside

## Key to the species of *Kunzea*

1. Leaves 2-3.2 mm wide, ± flat; flowers on pedicels 3-6.5 mm long; some stamens shorter than the petals; style to 2.5 mm long .....***K. ericoides***
- 1: Leaves 1-1.5 mm wide; concave above and keeled below; flowers ± sessile; all stamens longer than the petals; style to 5 mm long .....***K. ambigua***