

# Tree Profile: Twiggy Heath Myrtle - *Sannantha bidwillii* (ex *Babingtonia* or *Baeckea*)

General: According to Wikipedia - *Sannantha bidwillii* is a species in the myrtle family, Myrtaceae. It is endemic to Australia in QLD, but also found in NT, VIC and NSW. The species also known as *Baeckea* was first formally described in 1997 and given the name *Babingtonia bidwillii*. In 2007 it was placed in the newly created genus *Sannantha*. For many years the name *Baeckea virgata* was misapplied to this species. *Baeckea virgata*, currently *Sannantha virgata*, is endemic to New Caledonia!

It has been cultivated for a number of years under various names and still is available as such! *Sannantha* or *Baeckea* is a very popular species for Native Bonsai with masses of small white flowers in late spring and summer. Its bark is very attractive textured, giving it a great mature look. The leaves/foliage is soft and dark green.

One of the very best species for beginners to bonsai—it has naturally small leaves, tolerates hard pruning, and is extremely hardy.

Lighting & Temperature: Place in full sun, but semi shade or morning sun is o.k. too, it's also frost hardy.

Protect from hot drying winds!

Watering: Daily in the morning, it's very thirsty - keep the soil moist, but don't overwater it doesn't like wet soil.

Don't let it dry out!

Feeding: Best to use a slow or controlled release type fertilizer like Native Osmocote from spring to autumn at the drip line. You can use liquid fertilizer like Charlie Carp throughout the seasons.

Don't fertilize in the middle of the hot summer and 6 weeks after repotting!

Repotting: Can be done twice a year, late spring and autumn, using a well drained soil.

Propagation: Easy from seeds in spring, semi ripe cuttings in autumn, air-layering in early summer and collecting (Yamadori).

Check with the landowners or Council first!

Pruning and wiring: Best time is early summer after flowering during its growth time or autumn to get budding before winter. Will grow a very fine ramification when regularly pruned. It responds well to repeat pinching of new shoots.

Will shoot back on old wood, but not necessarily

where you want it! Best practice is to only prune back to green leaves, but can be cut back very hard.

We hardly ever do some wiring and prefer the clip and grow technique, because its branches are very brittle and of its delicate bark!

Pests and diseases: Webbing worm and Looper caterpillars, best to remove manually and use a systemic pesticide like Confidor.

Keep checking regularly!

For some fungal diseases use the relevant fungicide.

Styles: Informal upright, single or multiple trunks, group plantings, semi cascades. In all sizes including Shohin!



Handcrafted Bonsai Ceramics created in Victoria from Australian high fired stoneware clays.

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