

Basilicum polystachyon (L.) Moench

Family:

Lamiaceae

Moench, C. (1802) *Methodus Plantas Horti Botanici et Agri Marburgensis, Suppl.* : 143.

Common name:

Musk Basil

Stem

Usually flowers and fruits as an erect herb but occasionally exceeds a height of 1 m.

Leaves

Twigs 4-angled in transverse section. Leaf blades about 15-50 x 5-35 mm, glandular and hairy on both the upper and lower surfaces.

Flowers

Inflorescences about 3-6 cm long. Pedicels about 1-2 mm long. Calyx about 1.5-2 mm long, pubescent, hairs pale, glands yellow, globular. Corolla about 2-2.5 mm long, corolla lobes with yellow, globular glands on the outer surface. Anther cells +/- divaricate and the slits +/- continuous. Ovary on a glandular disk. Ovules 4 in each ovary with no sign of axile partitions. Style attached to the base of the ovaries. Stigma 2-lobed (or stigmas two).

Fruit

Calyx persistent, enclosing the nutlets, hairy and also clothed in yellowish or honey-coloured globular glands. Nutlets very small (resembling seeds), ellipsoid or ovoid, about 0.6-1 x 0.4 mm. Nutlets when boiled in water appear to develop a coating of hairs.

Seedlings

Features not available.

Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in WA, NT, CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards to south-eastern Queensland. Altitudinal range from near sea level to 500 m? Also occurs in Africa, Sri Lanka, SE Asia and Malesia.

Natural History & Notes

The plant is aromatic; it belongs to the mint family, and is closely allied to coleus and basil. Cribb (1981).

Synonyms

Moschosma polystachyum (L.) Benth., *Plantae Asiaticae Rariores* 2: 13(1830). **Ocimum polystachyon** L., *Mant.* 2: 567(1771). **Ocimum tenuiflorum** var. **anisodorum** (F.Muell.) Domin, *Bibliotheca Botanica* 89(4): 1116(1928). **Plectranthus parviflorus** R.Br., *Prodromus Florae Novae Hollandiae* : 506(1810), Type: Northern Australia, R. Brown; holo: BM?.

RFK Code

3103



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