

## *Hamelia patens*

### Scientific classification

Kingdom : *Plantae*  
Clade : *Angiosperms*  
Order : *Gentianales*  
Family : *Rubiaceae*  
Genus : *Hamelia*  
Species : *H. patens*



*Hamelia patens*

### Description

*Hamelia patens* is a large perennial shrub or small tree in the coffee family, Rubiaceae, that is native to the American subtropics and tropics. Firebush is a showy, fast-growing, semi-woody evergreen shrub that can get up to 15 ft tall under ideal conditions, but usually stays much smaller. It has whorled leaves, usually with three but occasionally as many as seven at each node. Leaves are elliptic to oval, about 15 cm long, and gray-velvet-hairy underneath with reddish veins and leaf-stalks. They are curled upward from the midvein. Throughout the year, firebush produces showy clusters of bright reddish-orange or scarlet tubular flowers, each about 2 cm long, at branch-ends. Even the flower stalks are red. The clusters of fruit also are showy. Each fruit is a juicy berry with many small seeds, ripening from green to yellow to red and finally to black. A firebush plant usually has flowers and fruit in various stages.

### Medicinal uses

The plants are used in folk medicine against a range of ailments. A number of active compounds have been found in fire-bush, Considered analgesic, antidysenteric, antihemorrhagic, antiparasitic, astringent, diuretic, febrifuge, antiinflammatory, antibacterial, antifungal, anesthetic, antitumor, immunostimulant, nervine, refrigerant, wound-healing.