Ericaceae

ERICA

Vessels typically very small (less than 50 μ mean tangential diameter) and often extremely small (less than 25 μ) in some species, moderately small (50-100 μ) in some species. Exclusively solitary (apart from apparent pairs produced by overlapping ends) in some species. Rarely less than 40 per sq. mm. in E. melanthera, and often more than 100. Perforation plates exclusively simple, or with only rare scalariform plates in some species. Intervascular pitting typically opposite and rather small or transitional. Pits to ray cells usually similar to the opposite pitting and small, but sometimes with many large, elongated pits. Occasionally with small deposits. Mean member length 0.4-0.8 mm.

Parenchyma typically very sparse or absent; when present often in contact with vessels, possibly owing to the frequency of the vessels rather than to any tendency to be paratracheal. Strands varying from 2-8 cells.

Rays usually of 2 distinct sizes where larger rays are 4 or more cells wide. 4-10 cells wide in Erica. Typically less than 1 mm. high. Uniseriate rays usually numerous and composed of high upright cells, but sometimes few, e.g. in E. cinerea. Heterogeneous (Kribs Type II A, or, less commonly, I), commonly with up to 4 marginal rows of upright cells in some species, or with more numerous marginal rows in others. Sheath cells present in many woods with rays up to 5 or more cells wide. Commonly containing gummy deposits. Crystals not observed.

Fibres typically with numerous bordered pits, the borders large and distinct. Sometimes with very numerous bordered pits in cells adjacent to the vessels and suggestive of tracheids. Mean length 0.5-1.3 mm.