

# Plants of South Eastern New South Wales



Flowering stem. Australian Plant Image Index, photographers FG & FJ Richardson, Meredith, Vic



Leaves and young seed cases. Photographer iharley, California, USA



Seed cases and seeds. Photographer Jackie Miles



Mature seed cases. Australian Plant Image Index, photographers Forest and Kim Starr, Hawaii



Shrub. Australian Plant Image Index, photographer RCH Shepherd, Fiji

## Common name

Castor oil plant

## Family

Euphorbiaceae

## Where found

**Forest** in clearings and regrowth, pastures, roadsides, gardens, disturbed sites, and stream banks. Mainly Sydney area and south to Jervis Bay. Occasionally elsewhere.

## Notes

**Introduced annual** or **perennial** herb or **shrub** to about 12 m tall. Seed cases spiny, **ovary** of female flowers prickly. Stems hairless, usually **glaucous**, dull, pale green, becoming streaked with red. Leaves with an unpleasant odour when rubbed. Leaves **alternating** up the stems, 10-80 cm long, 100-800 mm in diameter, **peltate**, **dissected** into 5-10 lobes with toothed margins. Male and female flowers on the same plant. Flowers with green bases, with 0 **petals** and 3-5 greyish to yellow **sepals** each 5-8 mm long,

united near the base. Female flowers with red **styles**. Male flowers with cream to yellowish **anthers**. Flowers in loose elongated clusters about 8-15 cm long, female flowers towards the top of the stalk, male flowers lower. Flowers all year. Seed cases green turning red, finally black, 10-30 mm in diameter, releasing the seeds explosively. Leaves and seeds poisonous.

General Biosecurity Duty all NSW.

PlantNET description: <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=sp&name=Ricinus~communis> (accessed 5 February, 2021)

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