

Ailanthus triphysa (Dennst.) Alston

Family:

Simaroubaceae

Alston, A.H.G. (1931) *A Handbook to the Flora of Ceylon pt. VI (= Supplement)* : 41.

Common name:

White Bean; Ash, Ferntop; Bean, White; Ferntop Ash; Siris, White; WHITE SIRIS

Stem

Outer blaze often marked with white, vertical stripes and some red markings.

Leaves

Leaf bearing twigs 1 cm or more in diameter. Stipules very small. Leaflet blades falcate, about 5-12 x 0.9-2 cm, very unequal-sided particularly at the base. Lateral veins forming loops well inside the blade margin. Midrib raised in a depression on the upper surface of the leaflet blade. Numerous, closely spaced oil dots visible with a lens.

Flowers

Inflorescence a slender panicle, about 10-20 cm long. Sepals about 0.5-0.8 mm long. Petals about 3.5-4.5 x 2 mm, glabrous. Stamens or staminodes 10. Carpels 2-4, usually 3, each about 3 mm long. Ovules 1 per carpel.

Fruit

Fruits green to greenish brown, papery in texture. Samaras about 5-6 x 1-2 cm. Main vascular bundle to the seed connected to an intramarginal vein on the samara.

Seedlings

Cotyledons fleshy, without venation. First pair of leaves trifoliolate, subsequent leaves compound with more than three leaflets. At the tenth leaf stage: leaves pinnate, lateral leaflets slightly unequal-sided, midrib raised on the upper surface; terminal bud clothed in pale hairs. Seed germination time 18 to 20 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in WA, CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards as far as north-eastern New South Wales. Altitudinal range from sea level to 900 m. Grows in monsoon forest and drier, more seasonal rain forest. Also occurs in Asia and Malesia.

Natural History & Notes

A fast growing tree that has a spreading leafy crown and would be useful as a shade or street tree for gardens in low rainfall areas.

If the bark is cut it exudes a treacly colourless resin which becomes brittle on drying. This was used in colonial times by Dr Lauterer, who found it made 'a good ointment for chronic ulcers, used pure or mixed with wax and lard. Fresh cuts and sores are not to be treated with this resin on account of the acrid oil.' Being aromatic, the resin has been used in India for making incense. Cribb (1981).

Synonyms

Adenantha triphysa Dennst., *Schlusssel Hortus Malab.* : 32 (1818), Type: Malabar, H. A. Rheede, Hortus Malab. 6: t. 15 (1686). **Ailanthus malabarica** DC., *Prodr.* 2: 89(1825), Type: Malabar. **Ailanthus imberbiflora** F.Muell., *Fragmenta Phytographiae Australiae* 3: 42(1862), Type: In vicinia urbis Rockhampton. A. Thozet. **Ailanthus imberbiflora var. macartneyi** F.M.Bailey, *Queensland Department of Agriculture and Stock. Botany Bulletin* 10: 21(1895), Type: Forest Hill, Mackay, W. Macartney, January, 1895.

RFK Code

839



Male flowers. © CSIRO



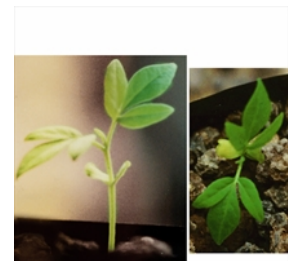
Female flowers. © CSIRO



Leaves and Flowers. © CSIRO



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



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