

Alstonia scholaris (L.) R.Br.

Family:

Apocynaceae

Brown, R. (1810) *On the Asclepiadeae* : 76.

Common name:

Milky Pine; Devil Tree; Dita Bark; Djetutung; White Pine; Milkwood; Palmira Alstonia; Pine, Milky; Pulai; White Cheesewood; Jelutung

Stem

Buttresses extending well up the trunk on large trees, gradually fusing with the stem. Latex flow rapid and copious.

Leaves

Petioles and twigs produce a milky exudate. Leaves in whorls of 4-8. Leaf blades elliptic, elliptic-lanceolate or elliptic-obovate, about 11.5-23 x 4-7.5 cm, petioles about 0.7-1.2 cm long. A small spur (or stipule) usually visible at the base of the petiole. Lateral veins about 25-40 on each side of the midrib. Intramarginal vein close to the edge of the leaf blade.

Flowers

Flowers strongly perfumed, about 5-10 mm diam. Calyx lobes about 1.8-2.2 mm long, sparsely or densely pubescent. Corolla tube about 5-9 mm long, sparsely to densely pubescent in the throat, lobes about 1.5-4.3 mm long, sparsely to densely pubescent, with the left margins overlapping. Anthers about 0.8-0.9 x 0.3 mm.

Fruit

Fruits about 15-32 cm long. Seeds oblong, not acuminate or caudate at either end, about 4-5 x 0.9-1.2 mm, hairs about 7-13 mm long.

Seedlings

Cotyledons elliptic, about 7-10 x 3-4 mm. First pair of leaves ovate to elliptic, about 7-15 x 3-6 mm, margins smooth, both the upper and lower surfaces of the leaf blades glabrous. At the tenth leaf stage: leaves very pale or glaucous on the underside. Plant entirely glabrous. Seed germination time 11 to 20 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Widespread in CYP, NEQ and CEQ. Altitudinal range from near sea level to about 900 m. A characteristic tree growing in lowland rain forest particularly in cyclone prone areas. Also occurs in India, Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, southern China, Malesia and the Solomon Islands.

Natural History & Notes

This species survives cyclonic winds by shedding most of its branches, even quite large ones, leaving bare poles standing in the forest. The crown is subsequently regenerated. Apical dominance is maintained in a rather unusual way. Each internode is terminated by a whorl of three or more branches. A dormant bud below the terminal whorl of branches becomes active and produces an orthotropic shoot which assumes the role of leader and mainstem until the next whorl of branches is produced.

It has been used in the treatment of malaria and bowel complaints, and as a tonic. Cribb (1981).

Synonyms

Alstonia scholaris (L.) R.Br. var. *scholaris*, *Blumea* 22: 24(1975). *Echtes scholaris* L., *Mant. Pl.* : 53(1767), Type: Lignum scholare in G. E. Rumphius, *Herb. Amboin.* 2:246, t. 82(1741).

RFK Code

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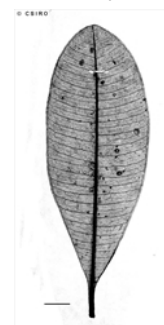
Flower side view. © Barry Jago



Flower. © Barry Jago



Dehiscent fruit and seeds. © W. T. Cooper



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



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