Alstonia spectabilis R.Br. subsp. spectabilis

Family: Apocynaceae


Common name: Hard Cheesewood; Jackapple; Leatherjacket; Milkwood, Hard; Milky Yellowwood; Yellowjacket; Bitterbark; Hard Milkwood

Stem
Living bark quite bitter when chewed. Brown or orange-brown stripes in the inner blaze.

Leaves
Twigs and petioles produce a milky exudate. Leaves in whorls of three or four. Leaf blades lanceolate, elliptic or obovate, variable in size but up to 36 x 12.5 cm, petioles about 1.5-2.5 cm long. Lateral veins about 18-20 on each side of the midrib, curving and often forming loops just inside the blade margin. Lower surface of the leaf blade glabrous.

Flowers
Flowers about 3.5-5 mm diam. Calyx lobes about 1.5-2.2 mm long, densely pubescent on the outer surface, glabrous on the inner surface or sparsely pubescent near the apex. Corolla tube about 3.5-4.9 mm long, densely pubescent on the outer surface, lobes about 1.5-2.6 mm long, densely pubescent on both the inner and outer surfaces, with the right margins overlapping. Stamens inserted near the throat of the corolla tube. Anthers about 0.9-1 x 0.6-0.7 mm.

Fruit
Fruits about 20-40 cm long. Seeds oblong, acuminate or acute at one or both ends, about 5-8 x 2-2.5 mm, hairs about 5-7 mm long.

Seedlings
Cotyledons narrowly elliptic, about 12-15 x 4-5 mm. First pair of leaves elliptic, about 18 x 6 mm, margins smooth, both the upper and lower surfaces of the leaf blade glabrous. At the tenth leaf stage: plant entirely glabrous. Leaf blade long and narrow, about 12 x 1.5 cm. Seed germination time 14 to 16 days.

Distribution and Ecology
Occurs naturally in CYP and the northern extremity of NEQ, becoming naturalised further south in NEQ. Altitudinal range from near sea level to 300 m. Grows in monsoon forest and gallery rain forest. Also occurs in Malesia (New Guinea).

Natural History & Notes
Apical dominance in this species is maintained in the same way as Alstonia muelleriana.

Synonyms
Alstonia spectabilis R.Br., On the Asclepiadeae : 76(1810), Type: In Insular Timor prope Coepang, cum floribus fructibusque Aprili 1803 observavi. R. Brown; holo: BM.
Alstonia somersetensis F.M.Bailey, Queensland Agricultural Journal 1(3): 229(1897), Type: Near Mr. Jardines house, Somerset. Alstonia longissima F.Muell., Descriptive Notes on Papuan Plants 1: 91(1877), Type: Fly-River; DAldertis [given by J.Monachino, Pacific Sci. 3 (1949) 161 as Fly-River; DAldertis, Papua, 1876, No. 6424.

RFK Code
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Leaves and fruit. © CSIRO

Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO

Cotyledon and 1st leaf stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO

10th leaf stage. © CSIRO

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