

# *Aristolochia acuminata* Lam.

## Family:

**Aristolochiaceae**

Lamarck, J.B.A.P de Monnet (1783) *Encycl.* 1: 254. Type: India, Commerson. Holo: P.

## Common name:

Birthwort, Indian; Native Dutchman' Pipe; Indian Birthwort

## Stem

Vine stem diameters to 3 cm recorded. Distinct rings of bark included in the wood. Blaze odour may resemble that of potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum*).

## Leaves

Leaf blades about 9-28 x 4.5-16.5 cm, petioles about 2-6 cm long, shallowly grooved in the upper surface, usually twisted towards the base. Leaves usually with 3-5 veins radiating from the base. Stems longitudinally ribbed from the decurrent petiole base. Leaf blades slightly aromatic or unpleasantly perfumed when crushed.

## Flowers

Ovary (hypanthium) 6-ribbed, about 10-13 mm long. Perianth tube consisting of an inflated base (attaining a diameter of about 7-8 mm), constricted above the base to form a tube about 10 x 1.5 mm and then flared at the apex to a diameter of about 5-6 mm. Apical lobe about 20-30 x 7 mm. Stamens 6, fused together to form a structure about 3 x 4 mm. Stigmas 6. Ovary 6-locular. Ovules numerous in each locule.

## Fruit

Capsules ellipsoid, about 3.5-4 x 2.5 cm before dehiscence. Following dehiscence the capsule resembles a parachute supported by strings about 5 cm long. Seeds numerous, stacked in columns. Each seed about 8-9 x 6-10 mm with a wing about 1-2 mm wide all around the margin. Embryo about 0.5-0.7 mm long.

## Seedlings

Cotyledons broadly oblong-elliptic, ovate to almost orbicular, about 12-15 x 9-12 mm, petioles hairy, about 3-4 mm long. First leaves ovate, minutely hairy, margins entire, venation depressed on the upper surface. Third leaf cordate. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade cordate to narrowly cordate, apex acuminate. Midrib depressed on the upper surface. Crushed leaves emit a strong unpleasant odour. Seed germination time 43 to 162 days.

## Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in WA, CYP, NEQ and CEQ. Altitudinal range from near sea level to 500 m. Grows in rain forest and monsoon forest. Also occurs in SE Asia, Malesia, New Guinea & Solomon Islands.

## Natural History & Notes

Food plant for the larval stages of the Cape York Birdwing and Red Bodied Swallowtail Butterflies. Common & Waterhouse (1981).

## Synonyms

***Aristolochia indica* var. *magna* Benth.**, *Flora Australiensis* 6: 209(1873), Type: Queensland. Endeavour river, Banks and Solander (Herb. R. Brown), Syn: BM?; Rockingham Bay, Dallachy. Syn: MEL. ***Aristolochia tagala* Cham.**, *Linnaea* 7: 207(1832), Type: Luconia prope Tierra alta.

## RFK Code

2092



Flowers. © R.L. Barrett



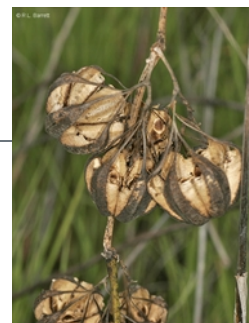
Flowers. © R.L. Barrett



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Leaves and flowers. © R.L. Barrett



Fruit. © R.L. Barrett



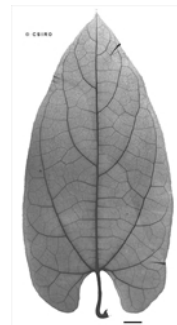
Fruit showing seeds. © R.L. Barrett



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Green and dehiscent fruit and seed. © W. T. Cooper



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO



Vine stem bark and vine stem transverse section. © CSIRO



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