Bidens subalternans DC.

Family: Asteraceae

Candolle, A.P. de (1836) Prodromus Systematis Naturalis Regni Vegetabilis 5: 600. Type: "in locis cultis circa Bahiam legit cl. Salzmann. .. (v.s. comm. a cl. Salzmann.)."

Common name: Greater Beggar’s Ticks

Stem
Annual herb, but occasionally reaches a shrub of 1-1.5 m tall.

Leaves
Twigs or stems 4-angled in transverse section. Leaf blades about (20-)6-12(-16) x (1.5-)3-7(-10) cm, very variable, usually bipinnatifid or bipinnatisect, sometimes bipinnate, ovate in outline.

Flowers
Flowers borne in heads 5-10 mm diam., 30-40 flowers per head. Outer involucral bracts linear to narrowly lanceolate, 4-15(-20) mm long, sometimes dilated at tip, margins ciliate, top side with fine hairs to hairy. Ray florets rudimentary, often absent, yellow; ligule absent.

Fruit
Each fruit or nutlet ending in 2-3(4) plumes each with downward pointing hairs which adhere to clothes, animal fur, etc. Fruits about 6-8 mm long. Seeds (achenes) about 8-17 mm long. Embryo about 6-8 mm long, cotyledons about 2/3 of the length of the embryo. Cotyledons wider than the radicle.

Seedlings
Each fruit or nutlet ending in 2-3(4) plumes each with downward pointing hairs which adhere to clothes, animal fur, etc. Fruits about 6-8 mm long. Seeds (achenes) about 8-17 mm long. Embryo about 6-8 mm long, cotyledons about 2/3 of the length of the embryo. Cotyledons wider than the radicle.

Distribution and Ecology
A cosmopolitan species of originally from South America, now naturalised in WA, NT, CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards to north-eastern New South Wales. Altitudinal range from near sea level to 600 m. Grows in monsoon forest, vine thickets and other vegetation types.

Natural History & Notes
Three varieties occur in Australia, see Flora of Australia 37: pages 465-467.

RFK Code
3652