

Brachychiton acerifolius (A.Cunn. ex G.Don) F.Muell.

Family:
Malvaceae



Mueller, F.J.H. von in Hooker, W.J. (ed.) (1857) *Hooker's Journal of Botany and Kew Garden Miscellany* 9: 409

Common name:

Illawarra Flame Tree; Lacebark Tree; Flametree; Flame Kurrajong; Kurrajong, Flame

Stem

Deciduous; leafless for a period between October and December. Inner blaze very fibrous showing a lace-like pattern corresponding to the oak grain in the wood. Yellowish horizontal flecks often present in the outer blaze. Lenticels arranged in vertical lines.

Leaves

Leaves entire or 3-5-lobed, about 12-20 x 5-18 cm. Two, sometimes four, main lateral veins and the midrib radiate from the base of the leaf blade. Twig bark strong and fibrous when stripped. Pores visible with a lens around the periphery of the twig pith.

Flowers

Perianth about 20-30 x 16-22 mm, valvate in the bud, glabrous or with scattered, stellate hairs outside, sparsely pubescent inside. Floral nectaries absent from the inside of the perianth tube. Usually flowering when leafless.

Fruit

Fruits glabrous outside, about 8-12 x 3.5-4 cm. Seeds about 10-12 x 5-7 mm.

Seedlings

Cotyledons oblong, about 40 x 20-25 mm. First leaves with a smooth margin becoming lobed at the 3rd or 4th leaf stage. At the tenth leaf stage: leaves 5-lobed; terminal bud clothed in stellate hairs. Seed germination time 18 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Endemic to Australia, occurs in CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards as far as south-eastern New South Wales. Altitudinal range in CYP and NEQ from near sea level to 1000 m. Grows in drier, more seasonal rain forest and well developed rain forests on a variety of sites.

Natural History & Notes

Like many members of the Sterculiaceae, this species produces mucilage when wounded. When the fruits of this species are wounded by insects they produce a mucilage. If this substance falls on motor vehicles it will often lift the paint off the vehicle much to the chagrin of the proud owner.

Food plant for the larval stages of the Pencilled Blue, Helenita Blue, Common Aeroplane and Tailed Emperor Butterflies. Common & Waterhouse (1981).

A spectacular tree commonly cultivated in Australia and overseas. Trees are usually leafless when flowering.

Synonyms

Brachychiton acerifolius Macarthur & C.Moore, *Catalogue des Collections de Bois Indigènes* .. Paris : 6 (1855), Type: (not cited). **Brachychiton acerifolius** Macarthur & C.Moore var. **acerifolius**, *Bolletino del R. Orto Botanico di Palermo* 1 : 61 (1897). **Brachychiton acerifolius** var. **typicum** Terrac., *Bolletino del R. Orto Botanico di Palermo* 1 : 61(1897). **Clompanus acerifolia** (G.Don) Kuntze, *Revisio Generum Plantarum* 1 : 78 (1891). **Sterculia acerifolia** A.Cunn. ex G.Don, *A General History of Dichlamydeous Plants* 1 : 517 (1831), Type: Native of New Holland; Cultivated, London, lost; neo: Illawarra?, without date, A. Cunningham s. n. , K.

RFK Code



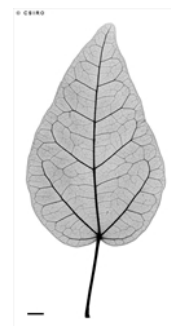
Leaves and Flowers. © CSIRO



Flower. © Barry Jago



Dehiscent fruit and seeds. © W. T. Cooper



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



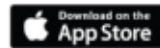
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10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO



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