

Calopogonium mucunoides Desv.

Family:
Fabaceae

Desvaux, N.A. (1826) *Annales des Sciences Naturelles* 9: 423. Type: Hab. in Guiana?.

Common name:
Calopo

Stem

A slender vine not exceeding a stem diameter of 2 cm.

Leaves

Leaflet blades about 3.5-9 x 3-6 cm, lateral leaflet stalks about 3 mm long, middle leaflet stalk about 8-12 mm long. Lateral leaflet blades oblique at the base, upper and lower surfaces of the leaflet blades clothed in pale prostrate hairs. Lateral veins about 3 or 4 on each side of the midrib. Compound leaf petiole about 5.5-8.5 cm long. Stems, twigs and compound leaf petioles clothed in erect brown hairs. Stipules hairy, triangular, about 3-5 mm long. Stipels linear, about 3 mm long.

Flowers

Flowers in clusters at irregular intervals on a long inflorescence axis. Bracts present at the base of each flower, each bract about 5-6 mm long. Calyx tube about 2 mm long, lobes filiform to narrowly triangular, about 4-5 mm long. All parts of the calyx clothed in long (2 mm) brown hairs. Petals: standard about 8-9 mm long with a green spot near the centre, otherwise pale bluish purple; wings about 8 x 2 mm; keel about 5 mm long. Stamens 10. The filaments of nine stamens fused to form a tube open on one side. Free part of the filaments about 2 mm long. One stamen free. Ovary densely hairy. Stigma terminal, +/- globular.

Fruit

Fruits about 30-40 x 4-5 mm, surface densely clothed in stiff, rust coloured hairs. Seeds about 5-7 per fruit, each seed oblongoid, about 3.5-5 x 2.5-3 mm. Radicle about 2 mm long, shorter and narrower than the cotyledons.

Seedlings

Cotyledons slightly asymmetrical, thick and fleshy, +/- oblong, widest at the apex, about 6.5-7.5 x 3-3.5 mm. Venation obvious below, barely visible on the upper surface. Hypocotyl hairy. First leaves glabrous, +/- orbicular, apex +/- obtuse, base shallowly cordate. Pulvinus and stipels present. Third leaf trifoliolate. At the tenth leaf stage: leaflet blades pinnely with about 4-5 veins on each side of the midrib. Stipels hairy, linear, about 3 mm long. Stipules ovate about 4-5 mm long, clothed in long, pale brown hairs. Seed germination time 14 days.

Distribution and Ecology

An introduced species originally from tropical America, now naturalised in NT, CYP, NEQ and CEQ. Altitudinal range probably not great, from near sea level to 200 m(?). Grows in disturbed areas such as roads through rain forest. Also naturalised in New Guinea and other parts of Malesia and the Pacific islands.

Natural History & Notes

A productive and high-yielding species introduced as a pasture legume for the wet tropics but not readily eaten by cattle while green; more palatable in the fry season. May become a weed in cane fields. Hacker (1990).

RFK Code

2548



© Barry Jago



Leaves, flowers and fruits. © CSIRO



Fruit. CC-BY J.L. Dowe



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO

