Cardwellia sublimis F.Muell.

Family: Proteaceae


Common name: Northern Silky Oak; Oak, Bull; Silky Oak; Oak, Silky; Oak; Lacewood; Bull Oak; Oak, Northern Silky

Stem
Oak grain in the wood. Blaze with a lace-like pattern corresponding to the oak grain in the wood. Dead bark layer generally thin, often peeling off fairly readily.

Leaves
Oak grain in the twigs. Numerous circular, pale brown lenticels on the twigs. Leaflets about 9-18 x 4-7 cm, with a brownish or silvery sheen on the underside. Young partly expanded shoots look like miniature, dark, partly clenched human hands.

Flowers
Flowers in pairs in the inflorescence, each flower sessile, but pairs of flowers pedunculate. Tepals about 10-18 mm long. Hypogynous glands four (two large & two small). Ovules about 10-14 per ovary.

Fruit
Follicles very large, about 8-11 cm long, woody, persisting for a while on the tree and subsequently on the ground beneath the tree. Seeds with a marginal wing about 5 mm wide. Seed + wing 6-7 x 2.5-3 cm.

Seedlings
Cotyledons resemble butterfly wings, about 20-30 x 70-80 mm, petioles about 2-4 mm long. A number of veins radiate from the petiole. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade elongate-elliptic to elongate-obovate, apex acuminate. Seed germination time 14 to 24 days.

Distribution and Ecology
Endemic to NEQ, widespread throughout the area. Altitudinal range from sea level to 1200 m. Grows in well developed rain forest on a variety of sites and produces one of the most decorative and most useful timbers in northern Queensland.

Natural History & Notes
This is one of the most useful timber trees in North Queensland rainforests. The timber can be used as a beautiful cabinet wood which is easy to work, cuts and polishes well to reveal a beautiful oak grain on both back-cut and quarter-cut boards. It is also a useful and moderately durable wood and many homes in North Queensland were largely constructed of this species. Many parts of the house utilize C. sublimis from the framing to the interior and exterior cladding. Attempts to grow this species in plantations are not encouraging.

Unripe fruit is eaten by Sulphur Crested Cockatoos.
A very good timber for the manufacture of window frames, a useful carving timber. Swain (1928).
Although very large in nature, open cultivated trees have excellent potential for parks and street trees. The showy panicles of cream flowers are followed by distinctive large fruits.
Wood specific gravity 0.56 Cause et al. (1989).

RFK Code
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