

Carissa laxiflora Benth.

Family:

Apocynaceae

Bentham, G. (1868) *Flora Australiensis* 4: 305. Type: Queensland, Cape York, 27 Oct. 1849, J. McGillivray; holotype: K.



Stem

Usually grows as a vine but can flower and fruit as a shrub. Vine stem diameters to 5 cm recorded. Blaze odour strong and unpleasant.

Leaves

Twigs and petioles produce a milky exudate. Stipular (?) thorns occasionally present, thorns about 10-20 mm long. Leaf blades about 30-80 x 11-50 mm, petioles about 2-5 mm long. Lateral veins difficult to distinguish, about 4 or 5 on each side of the midrib, curving inside the blade margin but not forming distinct loops.

Flowers

Flowers about 5-7 mm diam. Calyx lobes acute or attenuate at the apex, about 2-3 mm long overall. Corolla tube green, about 8-10 mm long, slightly swollen just below the throat, glabrous on the outer surface, hairy on the inner surface, lobes white or cream, about 2.8-4 mm long, hairy on the inner and outer surfaces. Anthers about 1-1.6 x 0.4-0.6 mm, filaments about 0.2 mm long. Style about 7-8 mm long. Stigma and anthers included in the corolla tube.

Fruit

Fruits globular, about 10-15 mm diam. Calyx lobes acute, persistent at the base of the fruit. Seeds +/- saucer-shaped with a pale depression on one side.

Seedlings

Cotyledons elliptic to orbicular, about 10-20 x 9-16 mm. First pair of leaves opposite and ovate to elliptic. At the tenth leaf stage: leaves ovate, apex apiculate, stipules very small and inconspicuous. Spines sometimes present between the petioles of each pair of leaves. Stems and petioles produce a milky exudate. Very small dark glands present on the stem between the petioles. Seed germination time 55 to 152 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in CYP and just extends southwards to the northern part of NEQ. Altitudinal range quite small, from near sea level to about 20 m. Usually grows in beach forest or on the landward side of mangroves. Also occurs in New Guinea.

Natural History & Notes

Food plant for the larval stages of the Common Crow Butterfly. Sankowsky & Neilsen (2000).

This species is recognised in some other parts of Australia and in Asia as *Carissa spinarum* L.

Synonyms

Arduina laxiflora (Benth.) K.Schum., *Die Natürlichen Pflanzenfamilien* 4(2) : 126(1895).

RFK Code

3020



Flowers [not vouchered]. © G. Sankowsky



Flowers [not vouchered]. © G. Sankowsky



Leaves and Flowers. © CSIRO



Leaves and fruit [not vouchered].

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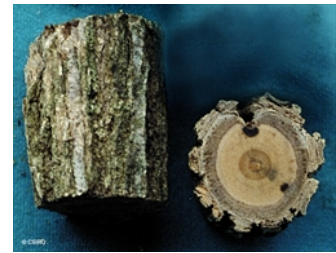
Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage with cotyledons remaining. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO



Vine stem bark and vine stem transverse section. © CSIRO

