

Cassia brewsteri (F.Muell.) Benth.

Family:

Fabaceae

Bentham, G. (1864) *Flora Australiensis* 2: 282.

Common name:

Cassia pea; Leichhardt Bean

Stem

Tree to 30 m tall.

Leaves

Stipules falling early. Lower leaflets smaller than upper leaflets on same leaf; 4 or 6 per leaf. Leaflets 3.2-6.5 x 1.5-3 cm; oblong-elliptic, apex retuse. Undersurface whitish-green. Leaflets petiole grooved on the upper surface, 3-4 mm long. Lateral veins looping. Compound leaf petiole swollen at its junction with the twig.

Flowers

Inflorescence terminal, 7-20 cm long, 10-50 flowers, pendulous. Flowers 10-18 mm diam. Calyx hairy on outside, 5-6 mm long, obtuse. Petals 5, glabrous, ovate, 7 x 5 mm. Stamens either 10 in total without staminodes present, or 7 with 3 staminodes. Stamens in 3 shapes and sizes: a) 3 with filament elongated, 13-14 mm long, S-curved with a fleshy bulbous node near the centre, anthers opening in apical pores with both basal and terminal apertures; b) 4 stamens alternating with previous type, shorter, 8 mm long with basal pores on anthers, anthers 3 x 1 mm; c) 3 stamens reduced to staminodes, filament 6 mm, anther 1 x 0.4 mm. Style long, longitudinally ribbed or 4-angled, 16-18 mm long, bristles on style towards base.

Fruit

Pods to 45 cm, moniliform, somewhat compressed or +/- circular in transverse section. Fruit may be purplish with glaucous bloom. Seed 11 x 8 mm, covered in leathery coat, greyish brown in colour.

Seedlings

Cotyledon oblong or elliptic, 13-16 x 5-8 mm, thickened. Cotyledons 3-veined or lateral veins indistinct. First pair of true leaves compound, alternate or opposite with 2-4 opposite leaflets. Hypocotyl hairy and flattened. 10-th leaf seedlings with stipules triangular 0.5 mm long; usually with 4 leaflets; a few scattered small hairs may be visible with a lens on underside of the leaflets; stem has a few scattered short hairs visible with a lens; young twigs and petioles often pinkish or red. Seed germination time 9 to 170 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in inland NEQ, CEQ and south into south-eastern Queensland. Altitudinal range from about 90 to 640 m. Mainly grows in open forest and woodland but also occurs in vine thickets.

Synonyms

Cathartocarpus brewsteri F.Muell., *Fragmenta Phytographiae Australiae* 1(5): 110(1859), Type: Banks of the Burdekin River.

RFK Code

3578



Flowers [not vouchered]. © G. Sankowsky



Flowers [not vouchered]. © G. Sankowsky



Fruit. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage. © CSIRO

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