Casuarina equisetifolia L.

Family: Casuarinaceae

Common name: Horsetail Sheoak; Beach Sheoak; Beach Casuarina; Casuarina; Coast Sheoak; Sheoak; Beach; Coastal Sheoak

Stem
Oak grain not conspicuous in the wood.

Leaves
Apparent leaves are actually twigs and the true leaves (in whorls of 4-8) are just visible to the naked eye when the needles are broken at a joint. Oak grain in the twigs.

Flowers
Male flowers: Flowers consist of scale-like perianth segments and one stamen. Female flowers: Flowers lack a perianth and the fused carpels usually enclose only two ovules.

Fruit
Cones about 10-20 x 10-15 mm. Samaras pale brown, about 6-8 mm long. Bracteoles thin.

Seedlings
Cotyledons without visible venation. At the tenth leaf stage: leaves very small, in whorls of six, venation not visible. Seed germination time 8 to 15 days.

Distribution and Ecology
Widespread in NT, CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards as far as north-eastern New South Wales; close to sea level. Grows in beach forest or on the strand. Also occurs in SE Asia, Malesia and the Pacific islands.

Natural History & Notes
This plant was used in colonial medicine, astringent bark recommended for diarrhoea and dysentery. The leaves, bark and stem are regarded as a contraceptive. Cribb (1981).

Synonyms

RFK Code
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