

Casuarina equisetifolia L.

Family:

Casuarinaceae



Linnaeus, C. von (1759) *Amoenitates Academicae* : 143. Type: Rumphius, Herbarium Amboinensis #: t. 57 (1742)

Common name:

Horsetail Sheoak; Beach Sheoak; Beach Casuarina; Casuarina; Coast Sheoak; 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

Casuarina equisetifolia L. subsp. *equisetifolia*, *Journal of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens* 6(1): 79(1982). *Casuarina equisetifolia* L. var. *equisetifolia*, *Flora Australiensis* 6: 197(1873).

Casuarina equisetifolia var. *typica* Domin, *Bibliotheca Botanica* 89(4): 555(1928). *Casuarina equisetifolia* subsp. *incana* (Benth.) L.A.S.Johnson, *Journal of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens* 6(1): 79(1982). *Casuarina equisetifolia* var. *incana* Benth., *Flora Australiensis* 6: 197(1873),

Type: Port Macquarrie, A. Cunningham, Leichhardt; Moreton island, C. Moore. *Casuarina equisetifolia* var. *incana* J.Poiss., *Nouvelles Archives du Museum d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris* 10 : 101(1874), Type: Forma in Australia orientali et Nova-Caledonia frequens ..

RFK Code

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Fruiting cones. © CSIRO



Scale bar 1mm. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination and 10th leaf stage. © CSIRO

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