

Commersonia bartramia (L.) Merr.

Family:

Malvaceae

Merrill, E.D. (1917) *An Interpretation of Rumphius's Herbarium Amboinense* : 362.

Common name:

Scrub Christmas Tree; Brown Kurrajong; Kurrajong, Brown

Stem

Fibrous stripes in the blaze.

Leaves

Twig bark strong and fibrous when stripped. Stellate hairs visible on the leaves and twigs with the aid of a lens. Leaf blades about 7-15 x 2.7-11 cm, densely clothed in pale or almost white hairs on the underside. Stipules minutely hairy when viewed with a lens.

Flowers

Flowers about 5 mm diam. in large panicles. Calyx and corolla stellate hairy throughout. Staminodes petaloid, stellate hairy, inflexed and covering the ovary in the bud, but reflexed to expose the ovary at anthesis. Each staminal filament with a bilobed gland at the base, each lobe long, subulate and hairy.

Fruit

Capsule about 10-12 mm diam., completely covered with long, stellate, hairy bristles, each bristle 5 mm or more long. Seeds about 1.5-2 x 1-1.5 mm, funicle (aril?) yellow or orange.

Seedlings

Cotyledons elliptic, about 6-9 x 5-7 mm undersurface clothed in short, pale hairs towards the base, visible only with a lens, hairs on the upper surface visible with a lens, numerous hairs along the margin. Seed germination time 15 to 21 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in NT, CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards to north eastern New South Wales. Altitudinal range from sea level to 800 m. Grows in well developed rain forest on a variety of sites. This species is favoured by disturbance and is a characteristic component of rain forest regrowth. Also occurs in New Guinea.

Natural History & Notes

A fast growing tree common along roads and areas of disturbance.

Synonyms

Muntingia bartramia L., *Amoen. Acad.* 4: 124(1759). **Commersonia echinata** J.R.Forst. & G.Forst., *Characteres Generum Plantarum* : 44(1775), Type: Celeb COMMERSON, Botanicus, Gallus, comes Illustriss. BOUGANVILLAEI, in itinere circa globum; obiit in Insula Mauritii.

RFK Code

189



Flower. © Barry Jago



Leaves and Flowers. © CSIRO



Fruit [not vouchered]. CC-BY J.L.

Dowe



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO



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