

# *Cryptocarya cunninghamii* Meisn.

## Family:

Lauraceae

Meissner, C.F. in Candolle, A.L.P.P. de (1864) *Prodromus* 15(1): 73. Type: Hunters River, Brunswick Bay, A. Cunningham 224. Lecto: G-DC; iso: A, BM?, BRI, K. Lectoparatype: A. Cunningham 228. Fide Hyland (1989).

## Common name:

Cunningham's Laurel; Coconut Laurel; Cunningham's Coconut Laurel; Laurel, Cunningham's; Laurel, Coconut

## Stem

Blaze odour resembling that of a mixture of apricots (*Prunus armeniaca*) and coconut (*Cocos nucifera*) and quite strong.

## Leaves

Twigs fluted when young and clothed in mainly straight, white or pale brown, mainly appressed hairs. Twigs when broken emit an odour like that of the blaze. Leaf blades about 6.5-13.5 x 2.4-5.6 cm, green on the underside, clothed in straight, white, appressed hairs when young but almost completely glabrous at maturity. Midrib depressed on the upper surface. Petioles channelled on the upper surface. Oil dots visible with a lens.

## Flowers

Inflorescence panicle, scarcely exceeding the leaves. Flowers unpleasantly perfumed. Lower half of the perianth tube glabrous on the inner surface. Tepals about 0.9-1.3 mm long, pubescent on the outer surface. Ovary usually glabrous occasionally sparsely pubescent, style usually glabrous.

## Fruit

Fruits globular, about 13-15 x 13-16 mm, very aromatic when cut or broken. Cotyledons white or cream.

## Seedlings

First pair of leaves ovate or elliptic, about 33-55 x 18-28 mm, green on the underside. At the tenth leaf stage: crushed leaves emit a strong coconut smell; petiole and midrib hairy on the upper surface of the leaf blade; oil dots small, difficult to see, visible only with a lens. Seed germination time 28 to 92 days.

## Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in WA, NT, CYP and NEQ. Altitudinal range from sea level to 500 m. Grows as an understory tree in well developed coastal lowland rain forest and drier rain forest. Probably also occurs in New Guinea.

## Natural History & Notes

This species should be treated with caution. The fruits can cause burning in the mouth if any attempt is made to eat them. This species has little commercial value as it seldom grows large enough to produce millable logs. Wood specific gravity 0.75. Hyland (1989).

If sawdust comes into contact with the skin it can cause burning and allergic type reactions in some people.

## RFK Code

488

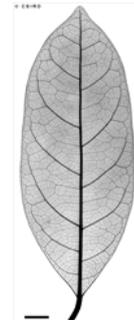


Flowers [not vouchered]. © G.

Sankowsky



Leaves and flowers [not vouchered]. © G. Sankowsky



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, hypogeal germination. © CSIRO



Web edition hosted at <https://apps.lucidcentral.org/rainforest>