Delarbrea michieana (F.Muell.) F.Muell.

Family: Myodocarpaceae


Common name: Blue Nun; Delarbrea

Stem

Usually grows as a small tree seldom exceeding 30 cm dbh but usually flowers and fruits as a shrub.

Leaves

Base of the compound leaf petiole swollen and clasping the stem or twig. Leaflets near the base of the compound leaf very reduced and scale-like but increasing in size upwards until the maximum size is attained towards the apex of the compound leaf rhachis. Leaflet blades variable, up to 21 x 9 cm. Twigs very pithy.

Flowers

Inflorescence pendulous. Petals about 2.5-3.2 mm long. Staminal filaments about 2-3 mm long.

Fruit

Fruits about 15-20 mm long, iridescent blue. Testa pitted on the outer surface and intruding into the endosperm. Embryo quite small, the cotyledons scarcely distinguishable even with magnification.

Seedlings

Cotyledons may be 5-veined. At the tenth leaf stage: terminal leaflets 3-veined, lateral leaflets penninerved; simple leaves 3-veined with long petioles; terminal leaflet of compound leaf with a long stalk, remainder with short stalks. Seed germination time 136 to 189 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Endemic to NEQ, widespread from Cooktown to Tully. Altitudinal range from near sea level to 1000 m. Grows as a small understory tree in different types of well developed rain forest.

Natural History & Notes

Satin Bowerbirds sometimes use this fruit as decoration. Cooper & Cooper (1994).

The colour of the fruits of this species is quite startling. It is more than likely that the colour or its ability to reflect light of other wave lengths is important in attracting dispersal agents (e.g. birds).

Synonyms

Porospermum michieanum F.Muell., Fragmenta Phytographiae Australiae 7: 95(1869), Type: Ad sinum marinum Rockinghams Bay; J. Dallachy.

RFK Code

493