

Dioscorea alata L.

Family:

Dioscoreaceae

Linnaeus, C. von (1753) *Species Plantarum* 2: 1033. Type: Habitat in Indiis.

Common name:

Greater Yam

Stem

A vigorous multistemmed vine but stem diameters not exceeding 2 cm. Aerial tubers.

Leaves

Leaf blades about 5-25 x 4.5-15 cm, petioles about 3-18 cm long, longitudinally ribbed. Usually 5-9 veins, including the midrib, radiating from the base of the leaf blade. Younger twigs usually have 4 wavy longitudinal wings. Wings resembling stipules, usually present at the base of the petiole and decurrent (running down the twigs). A single wing on each of the major veins on the underside of the leaf blade.

Flowers

Male flowers: spikes 1 or 2 per axil, 1-3 cm long; sepals and petals ovate; 1.5-2 cm long, yellow; stamens 6. Female flowers: racemes 1 or 2 per axil, 10-60 cm long; perianth similar to male; staminodes absent.

Fruit

Capsules broadly ovate in lateral view, retuse, 17-20 mm long; lobes to 15 mm wide.

Seedlings

Features not available.

Distribution and Ecology

An introduced species originally from SE Asia and Malesia, now naturalised in NT, CYP and NEQ. Altitudinal range from near sea level to 100 m. Grows in disturbed areas in lowland rain forest. Also naturalised on some of the Pacific Islands.

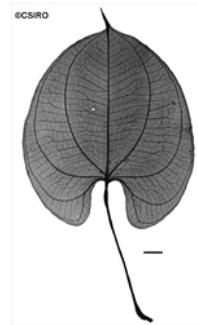
Natural History & Notes

This species produces both small aerial yams or bulbils and large subterranean yams, often quite contorted.

Some of this profile information and associated coding has been adapted from Telford (1986).

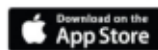
RFK Code

2550



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO

Copyright © CSIRO 2020, all rights reserved.



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