**Diospyros compacta** (R.Br.) Kosterm.

**Family:**
Ebenaceae


**Common name:**
Australian ebony; Ebony, Australian

**Stem**

Grows into a tree to 15 m tall but also flowers and fruits as a shrub. Bark on trees usually very dark, almost black.

**Leaves**

Leaf blades thick, coarse and leathery, about (1.5-)3-8(-12) x (0.8-)2-4(-8.5) cm, emarginate at the apex, margin recurved. Petioles about 0.3-1 cm long. Twig lenticels pale, elongated longitudinally, quite numerous and conspicuous. Midrib depressed or in a valley on the upper surface. Venation difficult to discern. Scattered black glands 1-4, often visible on towards base of the leaf blade underside.

**Flowers**

Male inflorescence or 1-5 flowers, usually 3. Male flowers: Outer surface of the calyx glabrous or sparsely clothed in short hairs; outer surface of the corolla densely clothed in much longer, pale, straight, prostrate hairs; stamens (4-)6-9, free or up to 3 singles and 3 fused pairs; pistillode 1.5 mm long, hairy. Female flowers mostly solitary; calyx 3-4-lobed; corolla 3-4-lobed, lobes broadly ovate; staminodes absent.

**Fruit**

Fruits globose, about 14 mm diam., soon becoming glabrous; 3-4 lobed calyx persistent at the base. Seeds ellipsoid, about 5-6.5 mm long. Embryo small, radicle 3-5 mm long, cotyledons flat, about 2.5 x 1.5 mm, wider than the radicle. Cotyledons orbicular, much wider than the radicle.

**Seedlings**

Cotyledons +/- orbicular, about 15-18 x 11-17 mm. First pair of leaves obovate. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blades obovate to narrowly spatulate, apex rounded to obtuse to spatulate, base cuneate to attenuate. Midrib depressed on the upper surface. Lateral veins forming very indistinct loops well inside the leaf blade margin. Terminal bud clothed in brown or pale brown prostrate hairs. Roots (hypocotyl) very dark, almost black. Seed germination time 11 to 45 days.

**Distribution and Ecology**

Probably endemic to Australia, occurs in NT, CYP, NEQ and CEQ. Altitudinal range small, usually close to sea level. Usually grows in beach forest or monsoon forest on islands or on the mainland close to the sea.

**Synonyms**


**RFK Code**

1063
Fruit, three views, cross section and seed. © W. T. Cooper

Fruit, side view and seed. © W. T. Cooper

Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO

Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO

Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO