

Ficus benjamina L.

Family:
Moraceae

Linnaeus, C. von (1767) *Mantissa Plantarum* : 129. Type: Habitat in India.

Common name:
Benjamin Fig; Fig, Benjamin; Fig, Weeping; Weeping Fig

Stem

A strangling fig or sometimes growing on rocks. Lenticels tending to be in horizontal lines. Twigs and branches weeping but not as conspicuously as Weeping Willow (*Salix babylonica*). Dead bark yellowish brown when cut.

Leaves

Petioles and twigs produce a milky exudate. Leaf blades about 3-12 x 1.5-6 cm. Stipules smooth about 1-2 cm long. Oil dots visible with a lens on both the upper and lower surfaces.

Flowers

Male flowers dispersed throughout the fig. Stigma globose and hairy. Bracts at the base of the fig, three. Lateral bracts not present on the outside of the fig body.

Fruit

Figs sessile, globular, about 10-12 x 10-12 mm. Orifice +/- closed by interlocking apical and internal bracts.

Seedlings

Cotyledons small, almost orbicular, about 2-3 mm long. Oil dots very small, difficult to see with a lens. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade lanceolate, glabrous, veins about 12-20 each side of the midrib, intramarginal vein distinct; oil dots small, visible with a lens; stipules narrowly triangular, sheathing the terminal bud and falling early soon after the shoot expands. Seed germination time 13 to 34 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in NT, CYP, NEQ and CEQ. Altitudinal range from near sea level to 250 m. Grows in monsoon forest and drier, more seasonal rain forest. Also occurs in SE Asia and Malesia. This species is widely cultivated in Queensland but it is not at all certain that the cultivated form originated in Australia.

Natural History & Notes

Fruit eaten by Fruit Pigeons. Cooper & Cooper (1994).

Commonly cultivated as a large spreading shade tree. Withstands strong winds. Also grown extensively as an indoor plant.

Synonyms

Ficus benjamina L. var. *benjamina*, *The Gardens' Bulletin Singapore* 17 : 396(1960). *Urostigma nitidum* Miq., *Hooker's London Journal of Botany* 6 : 584(1847). *Ficus nitida* Thunb., *Diss. Ficus* : 10(1786), Type: Not designated. Fide Chew (1989) *Fl. Australia* 3: 37.

RFK Code

583

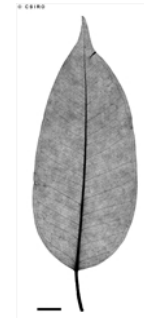


Leaves and figs. © CSIRO



Figs, side view and cross section.

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Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



Female flowers. © CSIRO



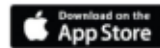
Male & female flowers(?). © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



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