

Ficus racemosa L.

Family:

Moraceae

Linnaeus, C. von (1753) *Species Plantarum* 2: 1060. Type: Habitat in India.

Common name:

Fig, Cluster; Cluster Tree; Figwood; Fig Tree; Cluster Fig

Stem

Not a strangling fig. Deciduous; leafless for a period in August or September. Exudate turns brown or brownish on exposure.

Leaves

Stipules shortly hairy, about 0.5-2 cm long, semi-persistent, remaining attached to the twig after each leaf expands. Petioles and twigs produce a milky exudate. Leaf blades about 6-20 x 4-9 cm. Oil dots sometimes visible with a lens.

Flowers

Tepals glabrous, lobed or laciniate-denticulate in the female flowers, entire in the male. Male flowers produced around the ostiole. Bracts at the base of the fig, three, persistent in ripe fruits. Lateral bracts not present on the outside of the fig body.

Fruit

Figs produced on special shoots from the trunk and main branches. Figs pedunculate, globular or depressed pyriform, about 30-35 x 35-40 mm. Orifice closed by interlocking and inflexed bracts.

Seedlings

Cotyledons orbicular, about 2 mm diam. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade ovate, apex acute, base obtuse, margin smooth or crenate, upper surface glabrous; oil dots very small, difficult to see with a lens; petiole with a few scattered hairs; stipules sheathing the terminal bud, about 5-10 mm long, persistent. Seed germination time 13 to 81 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in WA, NT, CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards as far as south eastern Queensland. . Altitudinal range from sea level to 500 m. Grows in dry rain forest, beach forest and gallery forest sometimes in areas which are otherwise quite dry and not conducive to rain forest development. Also occurs in SE Asia and Malesia.

Natural History & Notes

Fruit eaten by several species of birds. Cooper & Cooper (1994).

Food plant for the larval stages of the Two-brand Crow Butterfly. Common & Waterhouse (1981).

This species may have medicinal properties. (<http://squid2.laughingsquid.net/hosts/herbweb.com/herbage/A11274.htm>)

This tree is an important food source for a variety of birds and animals. Feral pigs are particularly fond of the fruit of this species and will pull branches down to obtain the fruits. Keen pig shooters will nearly always be successful if they wait near or in a fruiting tree of this species around sundown, assuming that they can shoot straight.

Synonyms

Ficus racemosa* L. var. *racemosa, *Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club* 73 : 323(1946). ***Ficus vesca* Miq.**, *Journal de Botanique Neerlandaise* 1: 243(1862), Type: Nova Hollandia borealis, Arnhemland, in regione Fitzmaurice-river, Oct. 1855: FERD MUELLER, secus Fitzroy-river: THOZET. ***Ficus semicostata* F.M.Bailey**, *Queensland Agricultural Journal* 26: 316(1911), Type: Queensland, Mr. Walter Hill; described from trees planted by him in Brisbane Botanic Gardens. ***Ficus racemosa* var. *vesca* (Miq.) M.F.Barrett**, *Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club* 73: 323(1946). ***Ficus glomerata* Roxb.**, *Plants of the Coast of Coromandel* 2: 13(1799), Type: India, It is a large tree, generally found in and about villages, and on the banks of rivers and water-courses, where the soil is rich and moist.

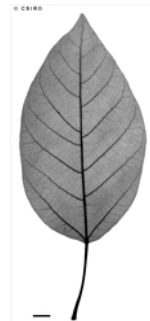
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Figs, side views and longitudinal section. © W. T. Cooper



Figs on cauliflorous infructescences. © CSIRO



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



Cotyledon and 1st leaf stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



Female flowers. © CSIRO



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