Helmholtzia acorifolia F. Muell.

Family: Philydraceae

Common name:
Puckerum; Helmholtzia; Kuranda

Stem
Stem or rhizome +/- horizontal or slightly ascending but the leaves +/- erect and reaching to a height of 1-2 m.

Leaves
Leaves arranged in one plane and held like a hand fan. Leaf blades glabrous, sword-like, up to 100-200 x 4 cm, venation longitudinal and parallel. Leaf blade constricted on one side about 1/4 of the way up from the base to form a ‘petiole’. Reticulate veins sinuous, +/- at right angles to the midrib.

Flowers
Inflorescence up to 30 cm long, bracteoles lanceolate up to 12 mm long. Individual flowers sessile, outer tepals lanceolate, about 8-14 mm long, hairy on the outer surface, inner tepals about 3 mm long. Stamens about 4 mm long, anthers bright yellow, locules about 2 mm long +/- clasping the style. Ovary about 2 mm long, densely hairy on the outer surface. Ovules numerous in each locule. Ovary about 5 mm long.

Fruit
Fruit globose, about 5-10 mm diam., 3-lobed, +/- translucent. Seeds about 2 mm long, dark reddish-brown.

Seedlings
First pair of leaves linear, about 4-10 x 0.5-1 mm, apex acute, base sheathing the stem, glabrous, venation longitudinal and parallel, petiole absent. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade produced in one plane like a hand fan. Leaf blade glabrous, linear, sessile, venation longitudinal and parallel, base clasping the stem and overlapping one another. Seed germination time 79 to 357 days.

Distribution and Ecology
Endemic to NEQ. Altitudinal range from 400-1500 m, rarely in lowland areas down to 50 m. Grows as an understory plant in undisturbed upland and mountain rain forest. Usually grows along creeks and in swamps and other permanently moist sites.

Natural History & Notes
An excellent understory plant sometimes cultivated in shaded moist or wet conditions.

RFK Code
3276