

Hibiscus heterophyllus Vent.

Family:

Malvaceae

Ventenat, E.P. (1805) *Jardin Malmaison* 2: t.103. Type: Ventenants plate.

Common name:

Native Cottonwood; Queensland Sorrel; Green Kurrajong; Native Hibiscus; Hibiscus, Native; Native Rosella

Stem

Flowers and fruits as a shrub or small tree up to 6 m tall.

Leaves

Leaf blades ovate to deeply 3-lobed, about 14-20 x 4-18 cm. Both the upper and lower surfaces of the leaf blade clothed in small spines with swollen bases. Stellate hairs visible on the lower surface of the leaf blade, much sparser on the upper surface. Petioles and twigs clothed in short spines. Stipules small, triangular, about 1-1.5 mm long. Twig bark strong and fibrous when stripped.

Flowers

Pedicels about 20 mm long. Epicalyx segments about 7-10, each about 20 mm long. Calyx about 20 mm long, outer surface densely clothed in stellate hairs. Petals about 5-8 cm long. Corolla mainly yellow, but dark red towards the centre. Staminal column about 25 mm long, staminal filaments about 1.5-2 mm long. Ovary clothed in appressed straight white hairs.

Fruit

Capsules about 15-20 mm long, clothed in erect, light brown hairs which irritate the skin. Seeds glabrous, dark brown and angular.

Seedlings

Hypocotyl hairy. Cotyledons ca. 13-21 x 15-20 mm, one large than the other. Petioles 17-22 mm long. Cotyledons broadly ovate. Hairy on all plant parts, hairs glandular. First leaves toothed, not lobed, blades 4-5 x 2.5-3.2 cm. Stem cylindric. As seedling matures hairs on stem become spines. Leaves gradually become lobed, lobes deeping as seedling develops. Leaves toothed, paler green on undersurface. Taproot present. Seed germination time 112 to 225 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Endemic to Australia, occurs infrequently in CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards as far as coastal central New South Wales. Altitudinal range from 10-500 m. Usually grows in wet sclerophyll forest bordering rain forest.

Natural History & Notes

A fine quick growing shrub for a sunny position in the garden. Flowers are large yellow with a red centre.

This plant has been reported as being edible. However, there is a report of kidney damage after drinking tea made from the leaves. (<http://www.newcrops.uq.edu.au/newslett/ncn18111.htm>)

Synonyms

***Hibiscus heterophyllus* var. *genuinus* Hochr.**, *Ann. Cons. Jard. Bot. Geneve* 4: 122(1900).

Hibiscus heterophyllus* Vent. subsp. *heterophyllus, *Australian Journal of Botany* 22:

168(1974), Type: Ventenats plate; holo. ***Hibiscus fitzgeraldii* F.Muell.**, *Fragm.* 8: 242(1874), Type: Queensland, Bowen River, R. D. Fitzgerald, s.n.; holo: MEL. ***Hibiscus heterophyllus* var. *leefei* Hochr.**, *Ann. Cons. Jard. Bot. Geneve* 4: 122(1900), Type: Queensland, Rockhampton, I. E. Leefe 44; holo: K.

RFK Code

3312



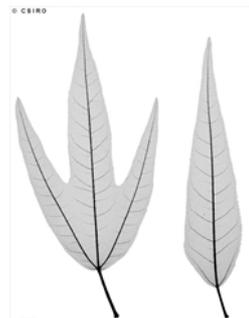
Flower. CC-BY R.L. Jago



Fruit. CC-BY R.L. Jago



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Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage. © CSIRO



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