

Hibiscus tiliaceus L.

Family:

Malvaceae

Linnaeus, C. von (1753) *Species Plantarum* 2: 694. Type: Habitat in India.

Common name:

Cottonwood, Coast; Beach Hibiscus; Hibiscus, Beach; Coast Hibiscus; Coastal Cottonwood; Cotton Tree; Majagua; Cottonwood; Mahoe; Coast Cottonwood; Cottonwood Hibiscus; Gatapa; Green Cottonwood; Native Hibiscus; Sea Hibiscus; Native Rosella

Stem

Frequently a poorly formed tree with branches often lying on the ground. Fibrous stripes in the outer blaze.

Leaves

Leaf blades about 5-20 x 4.5-18 cm, circular or cordate in outline with a large 'V' or indentation where the petiole is attached. Midrib and about eight veins radiate from the point of attachment of the petiole. Stipules rather large, about 15-35 x 8-15 mm. Twig bark strong and fibrous when stripped.

Flowers

Flowers large, corolla about 8 cm long. Epicalyx about 8-11-toothed. Calyx stellate hairy on the outer surface. Stamens and style fused to one another.

Fruit

Calyx and epicalyx persistent, both stellate hairy. Capsules oblong to +/- globose, about 2-2.5 cm long. densely hairy on the outer surface. Seeds +/- reniform, surface marked by lines of tubercles.

Seedlings

Cotyledons oblong to orbicular, about 8-10 mm long. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade reniform to cordate, apex shortly acuminate, upper surface with a few, small, inconspicuous, scabrous hairs along the midrib and main lateral veins; petiole hairy; stipules large, oblong, obovate. Seed germination time 14 to 17 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in WA, NT, CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards to north-eastern New South Wales. Altitudinal range very small, found at or near sea level. Grows in beach forest, on beaches and on banks of tidal streams. Pantropic, widespread in the tropics and subtropics of the world.

Natural History & Notes

Food plant for the larval stages of the Common Oakblue Butterfly. Common & Waterhouse (1981).

Grown as a shade and street tree and will withstand saline conditions. The large flowers are cream to yellow.

This species may have medicinal properties. (<http://squid2.laughingsquid.net/hosts/herbweb.com/herbage/A13228.htm>)

The leaves of this species are regarded as a contraceptive. Cribb (1981).

Synonyms

Hibiscus tiliaceus L. subsp. *tiliaceus*, *Blumea* 14: 30(1966).

RFK Code

330



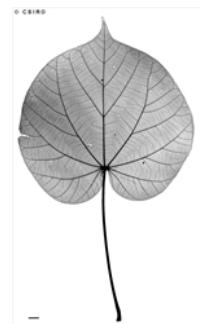
Flower. © CSIRO



Flower and bud, showing calyx and epicalyx. © G. Sankowsky



Dehiscent fruit and seeds. © W. T. Cooper



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO

