

Homalanthus novo-guineensis (Warb.) Lauterb. & K.Schum.

Family:

Euphorbiaceae

Schumann, K. (1900) *Fl. Schutzgeb. Sudsee* : 407. Type: Specific epithet originally novo-guineensis.

Common name:

Bleeding Heart; Mouse Deer's Poplar; Native Bleeding Heart; Native Poplar; Poplar; Tropical Bleeding Heart

Stem

Seldom exceeding 30 cm dbh.

Leaves

One or two cup-shaped glands on the upper surface of the leaf blade at its junction with the petiole. Glands frequently (but not always) pink or red inside. Stipules large and conspicuous but falling early. Leaf blades about 5-8 x 3.5-6.5 cm, much paler on the underside. Old leaves turn bright red just prior to falling.

Flowers

Both male and female flowers laterally compressed, about 1-1.5 mm diam. Cerebriform glands present on the inflorescence axis at the base of each pedicel.

Fruit

Fruits +/- globular but laterally compressed, about 8-9 x 8-9 mm, stigmas persistent at the apex, pedicels about 15-20 mm long, slender. Aril very oily. Seeds about 5 x 2.5-3 mm. Testa hard but brittle, fibres radial.

Seedlings

Cotyledons narrowly obovate-oblong, about 7-10 x 2 mm. First pair of leaves reniform to almost orbicular. At least some leaves usually peltate before the 10th leaf stage. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade cordate, apex broadly obtuse or rounded, upper surface glabrous, undersurface somewhat glaucous; two glands visible on the underside of the leaf blade near its junction with the petiole; several small flat glands occur on the underside of the leaf blade on lateral veins towards the margins; stipules sheathing, large and conspicuous, ovate, about 10-15 mm long, caducous. Seed germination time 14 to 28 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in WA, NT, CYP, NEQ and CEQ from near sea level to 1000 m. Favoured by disturbance and grows in such areas in well developed rain forest, but also found in rain forest margins, wet sclerophyll forest and swamp forest. Also occurs in Malesia and the Solomon Islands.

Natural History & Notes

This is a fast growing regrowth species following major disturbance to rainforest.

The seeds of this species are eagerly sought by Brown Pigeons or Cuckoo Doves. Fruit eaten by several species of birds. Cooper & Cooper (1994).

Synonyms

Omalanthus novo-guineensis (Warb.) Schum., *Die Flora der Deutschen Schutzgebiete in der Sudsee* : 407(1900). *Carumbium novo-guineense* Warb., *Bot. Jahrb.* 18: 199(1893), Type: New Guinea.

RFK Code

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Female flowers. © Barry Jago



Leaves and male flowers. © CSIRO



Leaves, habit and fruit. © CSIRO



Leaves and fruit. © CSIRO



Fruit, three views, cross and longitudinal sections. © W. T. Cooper



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO

