

Hypoestes phyllostachya Baker

Family:

Acanthaceae

Baker, J.G. (1887) *Journal of the Linnean Society* 22 : 511. Type: Madagascar, Baron 4907! Also Hildebrandt 3444!.

Common name:

Baby's-Tears; Freckle Face; Pink-Dot

Stem

Usually flowers and fruits as a shrub about 1 m tall but also flowers when smaller.

Leaves

Leaf blades maroon to dark green with numerous pink spots on the upper surface which show as cream to pale yellow spots on the lower surface. Leaf blades very variable in size. Petiole grooved or channelled on the upper surface. Lateral veins raised on the upper surface of the leaf blade. Twigs distinctly swollen above each pair of leaves. Twigs marked by scars between the petiole bases. These scars could easily be mistaken for stipular scars.

Flowers

Inflorescence consists of a few flowers arising from a group of 4 or 5 overlapping hairy bracts. Calyx 5-lobed but completely enclosed by bracts. Corolla 2-lipped and 4-lobed, inner surface darker than the outer. Corolla tube about 10 mm long. Outer surface of the corolla clothed in white slightly downward pointing hairs. Disk pale or +/- white, 2-lobed, oblique, enclosing the basal half of the ovary. Pollen white. Style long and slender, about 18-20 mm long, stigma bilobed. Ovules 4, in two pairs, one pair above the other.

Fruit

Calyx persistent at the base of the fruit but completely enclosed in bracts. Fruit about 10-12 mm long with a distinct waist. Seeds usually 4 per fruit. Seeds about 2-3 mm long. Testa tuberculate. Radicle longer than the cotyledons. Radicle reflexed, lying next to the cotyledons. Cotyledons wider than the radicle.

Seedlings

Cotyledons orbicular or wider than long, about 8-11 x 10-13 mm. First pair of leaves ovate, marked with conspicuous pink spots. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade ovate, apex acute to obtuse, base +/- oblique; marked with conspicuous pink spots and similar but white spots on the lower surface. Stem longitudinally ribbed but with lines (resembling stipular scars) extending from the base of one petiole to the other. Seed germination time 33 days.

Distribution and Ecology

An introduced species possibly introduced from Java(?) but perhaps originating in Madagascar, now naturalised in parts of NEQ and CEQ, and southwards to north-eastern New South Wales. Altitudinal range from 500-800 m. Usually grows as a weed in gardens but also found in disturbed areas in rain forest.

Natural History & Notes

A common garden weed.

RFK Code

3337



Leaves and Flowers. © CSIRO



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO



Web edition hosted at <https://apps.lucidcentral.org/rainforest>