Lophostemon suaveolens (Sol. ex Gaertn.) Peter G.Wilson & J.T.Waterh.

Family: Myrtaceae


Common name:
Swamp Mahogany; Apple; Mahogany, Swamp; Swamp Box; Swamp Turpentine; Mahogany, Paperbark; Box; Swamp; Paperbark Mahogany

Stem
Dead bark often soft and somewhat compressible.

Leaves
Oil dots visible with a lens if not visible to the naked eye. Leaf blades about 5.5-14 x 2.5-4 cm. Young shoots and younger leaf bearing twigs clothed in white, erect hairs. Young leaves, when crushed, emit an odour like that of geraniums (Pelargonium spp.). Old leaves turn orange-red prior to falling.

Flowers
Calyx lobes obtuse, persistent. Staminal fascicles up to 3-5 mm long, opposite the petals. Usually 30-50 stamens per fascicle.

Fruit
Fruit about 6-8 mm diam., included in the calyx tube (hypanthium). Seeds linear, about 1.5-2 mm long.

Seedlings
Cotyledons elliptic to ovate, about 2-4 mm long. A few very small oil dots may sometimes be seen with a lens. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade elliptic, apex acute, upper surface glabrous or with a few hairs near the base on the midrib; oil dots very small, visible only with a lens; petiole, terminal bud and stem clothed in long white or pale hairs. Seed germination time 8 to 21 days.

Distribution and Ecology
Occurs in CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards as far as north-eastern New South Wales. Altitudinal range from sea level to 900 m. Grows in swampy open forest but also found on the margin of rain forest and gallery forest. Also occurs in New Guinea.

Natural History & Notes
Formerly used as wharf piles particularly with the bark still attached. Swain (1928).

Synonyms
Tristania suaveolens (Solander ex Gaertn.)Sm., Rees' Cyclopaedia 36: no. 2(1817). Tristania suaveolens var. glabrescens F.M.Bailey, A Synopsis of the Queensland Flora : 182(1883), Type: (C. Ext.). Melaleuca suaveolens Soland. ex Gaertn., de Fruct. et Sem. 1: 73(1788), Type: Ex hortario Banksiano.

RFK Code
267
Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO

10th leaf stage. © CSIRO