

# *Macfadyena unguis-cati* (L.) A.H.Gentry

## Family:

**Bignoniaceae**

Gentry, A.H. (1973) *Brittonia* 25: 236.

## Common name:

Cat's Claw Creeper

## Stem

Stems cling to trees and other substances by means of numerous adventitious roots. Vine stem diameters to 7 cm recorded.

## Leaves

Compound leaves consist of 2 leaflets and the compound leaf axis ends in 3 tendrils. Leaflet blades about 3-6.5 x 1.2-3.5 cm, leaflet stalks about 1.5-7 mm long. Numerous dark flat glands present on the underside of the leaflet blades particularly near the midrib. Stems climb by means of both tendrils and adventitious roots. Tendrils 3-branched, each branch resembling a cat's claw. Tendrils produced between the pair of leaflets.

## Flowers

Calyx about 1-2 cm long. Corolla about 8-9 mm long. Stamens dimorphic, 2 long and 2 short and 1 staminode. Long stamens with filaments about 3 cm long. Short stamens with filaments about 1.8 cm long. Filaments hairy towards the base. Staminode about 0.5-0.7 cm long. Anther locules divaricate, attached to one anther only at the base. Anthers about 0.8-1 mm along their longer axis. Pollen grains cream to white. Ovary about 0.6 cm long. Style + stigma about 3 cm long.

## Fruit

Fruits pendulous, slender, flattened, about 25-47 x 1-2 cm. Seeds very numerous, winged. Seed + wing about 25-40 x 9-12 mm, wings about 10-15 mm long. Cotyledons broad and flat, wider than long, about 6 x 9-11 mm. Radicle about 1 mm long, much shorter and narrower than the cotyledons.

## Seedlings

First leaves ovate to orbicular, apex obtuse to apiculate, base obtuse, margins sparsely and obscurely toothed with 1 or 2 teeth on each side. Lateral veins forming loops inside the blade margin. Taproot swollen, carrot-like. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade lanceolate, elliptic to ovate, apex acute, mucronate, base rounded to almost cordate, margin sparsely toothed with 1-3 teeth on each side. Several flat pale glands visible on the underside of the leaf blade particularly towards the base. Midrib raised in a depression on the upper surface, lateral veins forming loops well inside the blade margin. Most seedling parts clothed in very short hairs which are scarcely visible even with a lens. Taproot thickened like a carrot (*Daucus carota*), about 1.5-2 x 1 cm. The leaves produced after the tenth leaf are often compound and bifoliolate with the rachis ending in a three-branched tendril. Seed germination time 32 days.

## Distribution and Ecology

An introduced species originally from central and South America (Mexico to Brazil and northern Argentina). naturalised in NEQ and southwards as far as north-eastern New South Wales. Altitudinal range in NEQ from near sea level to 900 metres.

## Natural History & Notes

This species can become a troublesome weed in some areas. It grows vigorously, flowers and fruits producing numerous wind-dispersed seeds.

## Synonyms

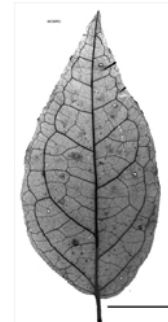
***Bignonia unguis-cati* L.**, *Species Plantarum* 2: 623(1753), Type: Habitat in Barbados, Domingo.

## RFK Code

2236



Leaves and Flowers. © CSIRO



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, hypogeal germination. © CSIRO



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