Melicope vitiflora (F.Muell.) T.G.Hartley

Family: Rutaceae


Common name:
Leatherwood; Toothache Tree; Northern Spermwood; Northern Evodia; Northern Doughwood; Fishpoison Wood; Fish Poison-wood; Coast Euodia; Doughwood, Northern; Leatherjacket; Northern Euodia

Stem
Outer dead bark rather corky, particularly towards the base of larger trees.

Leaves
Leaflet blades about 9-22 x 3.5-9 cm. Stalk of the middle leaflet longer than those of the lateral leaflets. About 7-12 lateral veins on each side of the midrib.

Flowers
Flowers about 3.5 mm diam. Sepals about 0.8 mm long. Petals about 2 mm long, pubescent on both the outer and inner surfaces. Staminal filaments pubescent. Disk 8-lobed, continuous, glabrous, surrounding the base of the ovary.

Fruit
Individual fruiting carpels about 5-6 mm long. Seeds about 3 mm diam. Aril shiny black on the outer surface, completely enclosing the seed. Testa slightly pitted or rugose.

Seedlings
Cotyledons elliptic, about 10 mm long. Oil dots more numerous near the margins. At the tenth leaf stage: lateral leaflets unequal-sided at the base; oil dots visible to the naked eye. Lateral veins forming loops inside the blade margin. Seed germination time 31 to 210 days.

Distribution and Ecology
Endemic to Australia, occurs in CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards to north-eastern New South Wales. Altitudinal range in CYP and NEQ from sea level to 1100 m. Grows in well developed rain forest on a variety of sites.

Natural History & Notes
Known as the toothache tree, northern Queensland Aborigines placed the juice of this species in the cavity of a decayed tooth to alleviate toothache. Cribb (1981).

Produces a useful general purpose timber.

Wood specific gravity 0.62. Cause et al. (1989).

Synonyms

RFK Code
242