

Microstachys chamaelea (L.) Hook.f.

Family:

Euphorbiaceae

Hooker, J.D. (1863) *Linnea* 32: 95.

Stem

Usually flowers and fruits as a herb but sometimes grows into a shrub about 1 m tall.

Leaves

Leaf blades about 20-50 x 3.5-8 mm, petioles 1-4 mm long, channelled on the upper surface. Leaf margin usually toothed but the teeth quite small, pale and visible only with a lens. Stipules caducous, small, short and triangular, about 0.5 mm long. Petioles and twigs emit a watery white to clear exudate.

Flowers

Flowers small, male flowers about 0.5 mm diam., borne in slender spikes while the female flowers about 0.5-1 mm diam., tend to be solitary. Female flower tepals with ciliate margins and two glands at the base. Ovary with three bilobed appendages on the outer surface.

Fruit

Capsules about 6-7 x 5 mm, disintegrating completely at maturity leaving only the central axis attached to the plant. Outer surface of the capsules sometimes quite smooth but more often with 2 lines of prominent glands or conical processes on the back of each lobe.

Seedlings

Cotyledons obovate, about 13-14 x 7 mm, apex truncate. First pair of leaves linear to obovate. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade linear to obovate, about 30-35 x 7 mm, apex retuse, base obtuse or cuneate, petiole about 1 mm long. Lateral veins about 8, forming loops inside the blade margin. Seed germination time 168 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in WA, NT, CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards as far as coastal central Queensland. Altitudinal range from near sea level to 800 m. Usually grows in open forest but also found in vine thickets and low closed forest on sand dunes close to the sea. Also occurs in Africa?, Asia and Malesia.

Natural History & Notes

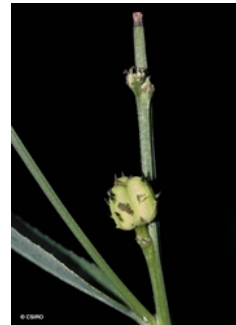
This species has been used medicinally in India. Cribb (1981).

Synonyms

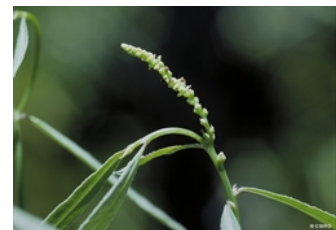
***Microstachys chamaelea* (L.) Hook.f.**, *Flora Tasmaniae* : 46(1859). ***Sebastiania chamaelea* (L.) Mull.Arg.**, *Prodromus* 15(2): 1175(1866). ***Tragia chamaelea* L.**, *Species Plantarum* : 981(1753), Type: Ceylon, Herb. Hermann Vol. 4: 43 No. 335, Lecto: BM, Esser (1999) *Blumea* 44: 176.

RFK Code

3091



Female flowers and fruit. © CSIRO



Flowers. © CSIRO



Leaves and Flowers. © CSIRO



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



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