

Musa banksii F.Muell.

Family:

Musaceae

Mueller, F.J.H. von (1864) *Fragmenta Phytographiae Australiae* 4: 132. Type: Queensland, Mt Elliot, E. Fitzalan; holo: MEL; iso: BRI.

Common name:

Wild Banana; Banana, Maroon-stemmed; Banana, Native; Banana, Wild; Maroon-stemmed Banana; Native Banana

Stem

Grows to a height of 6 m or more but also flowers and fruits when smaller.

Leaves

Leaves usually quite large, leaf blades about 120-230 x 40-80 cm, petioles about 40-80 cm long. Older leaf blades usually laciniate, fimbriate, the margins split at +/- right angles to the midrib. Petiole and midrib strong and fibrous. 'Stem' formed by the overlapping petiole bases. 'Oil dots' more obvious on the underside of the leaf blade. Lateral veins run at an angle of almost 90 to the margin of the leaf blade where they +/- amalgamate. Reticulate veins absent, all veins run from the midrib to the margin. Midrib deeply channelled on the upper surface.

Flowers

Inflorescence pendulous at least following pollination of the female flowers. Male flowers terminal, enclosed in an ovoid, multilayered sheath of overlapping bracts. Female and/or hermaphrodite flowers confined to the lower part of the inflorescence. Perianth consists of two parts, the longer part is an open tube of four or five fused lobes and the shorter part, which is about half as long, consists of one lobe only. In male flowers the larger tepal is about 27-42 x 8-11 mm with four teeth at the apex while the smaller tepal is about 12-22 x 7.5-14 mm. Pedicel about 7-15 mm long. Pollen grains large, white. In hermaphrodite flowers the larger tepal is about 35-45 x 10-12 mm with four teeth at the apex while the smaller tepal is about 18-23 x 15-16 mm. Pedicel is about 15 mm long.

Fruit

Infructescence pendulous. Pedicel about 1.5-6 cm long. Individual fruits are miniature bananas, about 8-14 x 1.5-2.5 cm, seeds numerous, black, about 4-5 mm diam. Testa thick and hard. Embryo small, resembling a miniature mushroom in shape. Endosperm white and granular.

Seedlings

At the tenth leaf stage: stem composed of sheathing petioles or leaf bases.

Distribution and Ecology

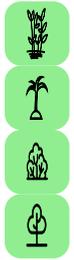
Occurs in CYP (Iron Range and McIlwraith Range), NEQ and southwards as far as Mt Elliot (south of Townsville). Altitudinal range from near sea level to 750 m. Grows in disturbed areas in lowland and upland rain forest. A popular food plant with feral pigs who tend to eat the whole plant. Also occurs in New Guinea and Samoa.

Synonyms

Musa banksii* F.Muell. var. *banksii, *Bibliotheca Botanica* 89(4): 536(1928). ***Musa acuminata* subsp. *banksii* N.W.Simmonds**, *Kew Bulletin* 11 11: 463(1957). ***Musa banksii* var. *muelleriana* Domin**, *Bibliotheca Botanica* 89(4): 536(1928), Type: Queensland, Daintree R., Oct. 1875, E. Fitzalan; holo: MEL; iso: BRI.

RFK Code

3138



Fruit, longitudinal and cross sectional views, seeds. © W. T. Cooper



Male section of inflorescence, fruit and longitudinal section. © CSIRO



Fruit and infructescence. © CSIRO





10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



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