

Nauclea orientalis (L.) L.

Family:

Rubiaceae

Linnaeus, C. von (1763) *Species Plantarum* ed. 2 : 243.

Common name:

Cheesewood; Canary Cheesewood; Cape York Leichardt; Leichardt; Leichardt Pine; Leichardt Tree; Leichardt's Pine; Pine, Leichardt's; Soft Leichardt; Yellow Cheesewood; Burr Tree; Canary-wood

Stem

Deciduous; leafless for a period in August or September. Dead bark orange to yellow when cut.

Leaves

Leaves generally rather large, leaf blades about 15-30 x 10-18 cm. Stipules large and conspicuous, about 1-3.5 cm long, apex obtuse. Red glands, resembling insect eggs, attached to the inner surface of each stipule near the base.

Flowers

Calyx tubes fused to one another to form a perfectly spherical head of flowers. Corolla tube longer than the lobes, corolla lobes about 2-3 mm long. Anthers +/- sessile, attached to the apex of the corolla tube. Style and stigma white, stigma +/- cylindrical or bullet-shaped.

Fruit

Fruits about 4-5 cm diam., outer surface reticulately rugose. Seeds small, about 1.5-2 mm long, very numerous in each fruit. Testa finely reticulate.

Seedlings

Cotyledons ovate, about 3-4 mm long. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade elliptic, glabrous; stipules interpetiolar, large, foliaceous, conspicuous, oblong to obovate, apex obtuse. Seed germination time 4 to 20 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in WA, NT, CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards to south-eastern Queensland. Altitudinal range from sea level to 450 m. A characteristic tree of the gallery forests in northern Australia, but also grows in lowland rain forest particularly in swampy situations. Also occurs in Asia and Malasia.

Natural History & Notes

Fallen fruit eaten by Cassowaries. Cooper & Cooper (1994).

A useful carving timber (Swain (1928).

A large spreading and shady tree that is often cultivated. Flowers are in large ball-like heads and are strongly perfumed.

An infusion of the barks causes vomiting, and was used by north Queensland Aborigines to treat 'sore belly' and sometimes snakebite; at Bloomfield River, a decoction of the bark was used externally as an application for rheumatic pains. Cribb (1981).

Produces a useful, moderately durable, general purpose timber.

Wood specific gravity 0.56. Cause et al. (1989).

Synonyms

Cephalanthus orientalis L., *Species Plantarum* ed. 1 : 95(1753), Type: Lecto: Plate 338 in Hermanns Herbarium, BM. Fide Merrill (1915).

RFK Code

256



Flowers. © Barry Jago



Flowers. © Stanley Breeden



Leaves and Flowers. © B. Gray



Fruit, side view and cross section.

© W. T. Cooper



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO

