Family:
Solanaceae
Linnaeus, C. von (1753) *Species Plantarum* 1: 180. Type: South America.

Common name:
Tobacco

Stem

Usually flowers and fruits as a shrub about 1-2 m tall.

Leaves

Leaf blades about 8-50 x 3-16 cm, petioles about 0-5 cm long winged along the margin and also clasping the stem. Both the upper and lower leaf blade surfaces clothed in simple, i.e. unbranched, glandular hairs. Lateral veins about 10-12 on each side of the midrib.

Flowers

Inflorescence a large terminal panicle clothed in dense glandular hairs. Calyx green about 16-27 mm long, lobes narrow, Calyx outer surface densely clothed in pale glandular hairs. Corolla tube about 45-50 x 5-9 mm, densely clothed in pale glandular hairs, apex flared to form 5 red triangular lobes. Stamens attached near the base of the corolla tube, one lower than the rest, filaments densely clothed in hairs for the lower third. Ovary about 8 x 5 mm, base encircled by a narrow, thin disk with 5 finely pointed lobes. Style about 35 mm long. Ovules numerous in each locule.

Fruit

Capsules about 15 x 7-8 mm, brown when ripe, calyx lobes persistent +/- enclosing the capsule. Seeds very numerous, each seed about 0.6 x 0.25-0.3 mm. Embryo minute, less than 0.25 mm long.

Seedlings

Cotyledons ovate-orbicular, about 4-5 x 3-5 mm. Venation, including the midrib, not obvious. First leaves soft and delicate, spathulate, base very attenuate, clothed in long translucent hairs. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade obovate, tapering gradually to the petiole. Both the upper and lower surfaces clothed in erect translucent hairs. Lateral veins 5 or 6 on each side of the midrib. Stems and petioles densely clothed in erect translucent hairs. Seed germination time 13 days.

Distribution and Ecology

An introduced species originally from the Americas. Now naturalised in NEQ and CEQ. Sometimes found growing on rain forest margins and road edges through rain forest.

Natural History & Notes

Grown commercially to produce tobacco, this shrub has been naturalised for many years. All plant parts are poisonous if ingested. Contains the addictive alkaloid nicotine.

RFK Code

3552