

Polyscias australiana (F.Muell.) Philipson

Family:

Araliaceae

Philipson, W.R. (1978) *Blumea* 24: 171.

Common name:

Basswood; Ivory Basswood

Stem

Usually grows into a small tree seldom exceeding 30 cm dbh but often flowers and fruits as a large shrub. Blaze odour strong, generally regarded as unpleasant.

Leaves

Base of the compound leaf rhachis clasping the twig. Compound leaf rhachis swollen at point of attachment of each pair of leaflets. Leaf bearing twigs about 1 cm or more diameter. Young shoots densely clothed in short rusty brown hairs. Leaflets in more than 5 pairs. leaflet blades about 9-18 x 4-10 cm.

Flowers

Flowers in umbels which are arranged in diffuse panicles. Calyx lobes small and inconspicuous. Petals about 1.5 mm long. Style arms fused, forming a beak-like projection after anthesis.

Fruit

Fruits ovoid, about 8-9 mm diam, dried fruits 3.5-6 mm long, 3 or 4-locular. Fruiting pedicels 3-9 mm long. Style arms, although persisting, do not form a conspicuous part of the mature fruit. Embryo very small.

Seedlings

Cotyledons ovate, about 6-11 mm long, apex acute or obtuse, base rounded, glabrous. First pair of leaves ovate with 1 or 2 teeth near the apex. At the tenth leaf stage: leaflets lanceolate or elliptic, apex acuminate, base cuneate. Seed germination time 50 to 187 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Widespread, occurs in CYP, NEQ and CEQ. Altitudinal range from near sea level to about 1000 m. Often grows in wet sclerophyll forest or on the margin of rain forest but also found as a regrowth species in disturbed rain forest. Also occurs in New Guinea.

Natural History & Notes

Leaflets of this species (turned upside down) are often found in the playground of the Golden Bower Bird.

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

Synonyms

***Iringia australiana* (F.Muell.) F.Muell.**, *Fragmenta Phytographiae Australiae* 5: 18(1865).

Kissodendron australianum* (F.Muell.) Seem.**, *Journal of Botany* 3: 201(1865). ***Kissodendron

australianum* (F.Muell.) Seem. var. *australianum, *Contributions from the Arnold Arboretum of*

Harvard University 4: 83(1933). ***Hedera australiana* F.Muell.**, *Fragmenta Phytographiae*

Australiae 4: 120(1864), Type: Secundum amnes silvaticos ad Rockingham Bay, Dallachy.

***Kissodendron australianum* var. *furfuraceum* C.T.White**, *Contributions from the Arnold*

Arboretum of Harvard University 4: 83(1933), Type: Boonjje, Atherton Tableland, alt. 700 m.,

common in rain-forest, no. 1256 (type; flowering specimens), Oct

RFK Code

187



Flower and buds. © Barry Jago



Flower. © Barry Jago



Habit, leaves and fruit. © CSIRO



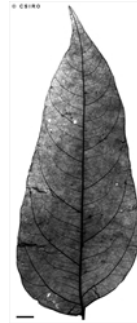
Habit, leaves and flowers. © CSIRO



Flowers and immature fruit. ©
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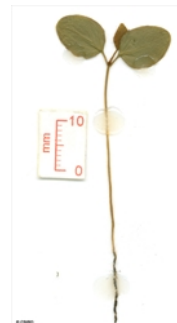
Fruit and seed. © W. T. Cooper



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage. © CSIRO

