

Polyscias elegans (C.Moore & F.Muell.) Harms

Family:

Araliaceae

Harms, H.A.T. in Engler, H.G.A. & Prantl, K.A.E. (1894) *Die Natürlichen Pflanzenfamilien* 3(8): 45.

Common name:

Silver Basswood; Black Pencil Cedar; Cedar, Black Pencil; Celerywood; Mowbulan Whitewood

Stem

Blaze odour resembles celery. Wood white, very soft and light. Brownish fibrous stripes visible in the blaze.

Leaves

Crushed leaves and twigs smell like celery (*Apium graveolens*). Transverse sections of the compound leaf rhachis show that it is mainly pith which contains large pores visible to the naked eye. Leaflet blades about 3.5-14 x 2-6 cm. Midrib raised on the upper surface of the leaflet blade.

Flowers

Flowers in racemes which are arranged in panicles. Calyx tube without lobes. Petals about 3 mm long. Style arms free and divergent following anthesis.

Fruit

Fruits depressed globular, conspicuously laterally compressed, about 5-6 x 5-6 x 3-3.5 mm. Style arms divergent persisting at the apex of the fruit. Embryo very small.

Seedlings

Cotyledons elliptic to almost orbicular, about 8-10 mm long. First leaf produced usually simple, then 4-8 trifoliolate leaves before pinnate leaves are produced. At the tenth leaf stage: leaflets +/- elliptic, apex acuminate, glabrous; terminal bud densely clothed in pale stellate hairs or scales. Seed germination time 83 to 226 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Widespread in CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards to coastal central New South Wales. Altitudinal range from near sea level to 1000 m. A characteristic tree of disturbed rain forest in the higher rainfall areas but also grows as a canopy tree in monsoon forest and drier rain forest. Also occurs in New Guinea.

Natural History & Notes

Fruit eaten by several species of birds. Cooper & Cooper (1994).

Generally regarded as a rather inferior species for the production of timber. However, this species regenerates prolifically after a disturbance and each year produces large crops of fruit.

Synonyms

Nothopanax elegans (C.Moore) Seem., *Flora Vitiensis* : 114(1868). **Tieghemopanax elegans** (C.Moore & F.Muell.) R.Vig., *Bulletin de la Societe Botanique de France* 53 : 308(1905). **Gelibia elegans** (C.Moore & F.Muell.) Hutch., *The Genera of Flowering Plants* 2 : 58(1967). **Panax elegans** C.Moore & F.Muell., *Transactions of the Philosophical Institute of Victoria* 2: 68(1857), Type: Richmond River. C. Moore. Moreton Bay. Hill and Muller.

RFK Code

36



Flower. © Barry Jago



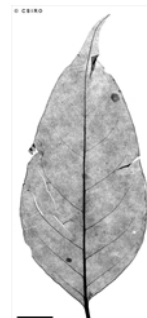
Flowers and immature fruits. © CSIRO



Fruit, side view and cross section. © W. T. Cooper



Leaves and fruits. © CSIRO



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO

