Rhododendron lochiae F.Muell.

Family:
Ericaceae


Common name:
Rhododendron; Rhododendron, Native; Native Rhododendron

Stem
Usually grows as a terrestrial or lithophytic shrub to 6 m.

Leaves
Leaves in pseudowhorls of 3-5. Leaf blades rather thick and leathery, about 4-12 x 2-7 cm, cracking when folded. Apex acute to obtuse to acuminate, ultimate apex often retuse. Lateral veins 5-9 on each side of midrib, form loops inside the blade margin. Underside of the leaf blade marked by numerous dark peltate scales. Petiole channelled on the upper surface.

Flowers
Umbel 2-6-flowered. Corolla funnel-shaped, curved, red to reddish-pink, 2.5-5.5 cm long in all, +/- glabrous outside but marked by scales. Stamens ten, anthers presented in a cluster in the upper part of the throat, anthers yellowish; filaments red, glabrous. Base of the ovary surrounded by a lobed disk with the staminal filaments inserted in the indentations. Pollen white. Ovary with scales, sometimes with erect white hairs. Basal half of the style clothed in scales and sometimes with white hairs. Stigma 4-lobed.

Fruit
Capsule rather long and narrow before dehiscing, about 2-2.5 cm long. Seed narrow, about 2.5-3 mm long with a slender somewhat twisted wing or tail on each end. Embryo cylindrical, cotyledons about as wide as the radicle. Seeds may germinate inside the capsule.

Seedlings
Seed germination time 23 to 331 days. Cotyledons obovate, ovate to elliptic, about 1.5-3 x 0.5-1 mm. First pair of true leaves obovate, about 2-3 x 1 mm, apex obtuse, base cuneate, glabrous, petiole about 1 mm long, lateral veins not visible. At the tenth leaf stage: all seedling parts clothed in pale brown scale-like glands which are visible to the naked eye. Leaf blade elliptic-ovate, about 8 x 5 mm, apex obtuse, midrib depressed on the upper surface. Lateral veins difficult to distinguish. Terminal bud scaly.

Distribution and Ecology
Endemic to NEQ, occurs on Bell Peak, the Bellenden Ker Range and Mt Bartle Frere. Altitudinal range from 980-1600 m. Grows as an epiphyte in well developed rain forest but also found as a lithophytic shrub on boulders in stunted windswept rain forest on mountain tops.

Synonyms

RFK Code
3062