**Solanum erianthum** D.Don

**Family:** Solanaceae


**Common name:**
Potato Tree; Tobacco Tree; Tobacco, Wild; Nightshade; Flannel Bush; Wild Tobacco

**Stem**
Occasionally grows into a small tree but usually flowers and fruits as a shrub.

**Leaves**
Twigs, petioles and leaf blades unarmed but densely clothed in stellate hairs. Stellate hairs present on both the upper and lower surfaces of the leaf blade but more numerous on the underside. Leaf blades about 8-24 x 4-15 cm, petioles 1-10 cm long. Lateral veins about 6-9. Crushed leaves emit a strong odour.

**Flowers**
Inflorescence branched, many-flowered. Pedicels about 5-10 mm long, densely stellate hairy. Calyx 4-7 mm long, lobes about 1-2.5 mm long, both stellate hairy on the outer and inner surfaces. Corolla about 13-19 mm diam., stellate hairy on the outer surface but glabrous on the inner surface. Anthers about 2.5-3 mm long. Ovary clothed in straight hairs.

**Fruit**
Fruits globular, about 10 mm diam., stellate pubescent on the outer surface. Seeds about 1.5-2 mm long. Embryo horseshoe-shaped, cotyledons about as wide as the radicle.

**Seedlings**
Cotyledons lanceolate or +/- orbicular, about 5-9 x 4-6 mm. First pair of leaves alternate, clothed in pale simple and stellate hairs. At the tenth leaf stage: leaves lanceolate, densely stellate hairy on both the upper and lower surfaces. Stem, petiole and terminal bud also stellate hairy. Seed germination time 17 to 383 days.

**Distribution and Ecology**
Occurs in NT, CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards as far as north-eastern New South Wales. Altitudinal range in CYP and NEQ from 250-1000 m. Grows in disturbed areas in upland rain forest particularly along roads. Usually found in areas where the rainfall is at the lower end of the range which supports rain forest and where the nutrient status of the soil is higher than average. Also occurs in Central America, Africa and Asia but generally thought to be indigenous to Australia.

**Synonyms**
*Solanum verbascifolium* L., *Species Plantarum*: 184(1753), Type: Habitat in America.

**RFK Code**
3214