

Thespesia populnea (L.) Sol. ex Correa

Family:

Malvaceae

Correa da Serra, J.F. (1807) *Annales du Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle* 8: 290. Lectotype: "Ceylon, Herb. Hermann, Vol. IV, fol. 34, Linn. n. 258 (lectotype: BM)."

Common name:

Tulip Tree; Indian Tulip Tree; Portia Tree; Pacific Rosewood

Stem

Shrub or tree to 12 m. Blaze finely layered.

Leaves

Leaf blades cordate to shallowly cordate or truncate, about 5-17 x 4-11.5 cm. Midrib and usually four major and two minor lateral veins radiating from the point of attachment of the petiole. Twigs rather pithy and twig bark strong and fibrous when stripped.

Flowers

Flowers large, solitary in the leaf axils, pedicels about 2.5-10 cm long. Epicalyx segments 3, often present in more mature buds and occasionally in flowers. Calyx +/- cupular with minute teeth, but spreading as the flower develops. Corolla large, about 6-7 cm long, mainly yellow (red towards the base) but turning pink or red throughout following anthesis. Stamens fused to form a central column, anthers horseshoe-shaped. Ovules 4 per locule.

Fruit

Fruits depressed globular to broadly ovoid, about 25-45 mm diam. Fruiting pedicel normally short and erect, with bracteate joint near base. Outer fruit not splitting. Seeds about 15 x 10 mm, densely hairy with long soft hairs especially on angles. Cotyledons crumpled and rolled.

Seedlings

Cotyledons transversely elliptic, about 19-27 x 31-47 mm, 5-veined, numerous dark red glands visible with a lens. At the tenth leaf stage: leaves cordate, apex acuminate, base cordate, leaf blade glabrous with a few reddish scales on the upper surface; numerous oil glands visible with a lens; petiole, stem and terminal bud clothed in round or stellate reddish scales; stipules linear, about 2 mm long. Seed germination time 46 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in CYP, NEQ and CEQ. Altitudinal range very small, at or slightly above sea level. Grows in beach forest, gallery forest (particularly on banks of tidal streams) and on beaches. Also throughout the tropics.

Synonyms

Hibiscus populneus L., *Species Plantarum* 2: 694 (1753), Lectotype: "Ceylon, Herb. Hermann, Vol. IV, fol. 34, Linn. n. 258 (lectotype: BM)."

RFK Code

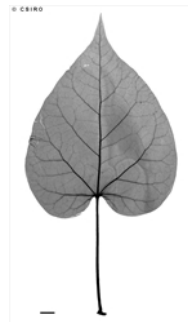
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Leaves and flower. © CSIRO



Fruit, three views, longitudinal section and seeds. © W. T. Cooper



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



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