

Trichosanthes cucumerina L. var. *cucumerina*

Family:

Cucurbitaceae

Haines, H.H. (1922) *The Botany of Bihar & Orissa* : 388.

Common name:

Annual Gourd

Stem

A slender vine to 2 m, stem diameter of 1-2 mm, ribbed. Tendrils 2 or 3-branched, tips equipped with haustoria-like structures.

Leaves

Crushed leaves emit an unpleasant odour resembling that of *Diplocyclos palmatus*. Leaf simple, blades often wider than long, variable from unlobed to shallowly or deeply three or more lobes. Leaf blades about 2.3-19 x 2.5-15 cm, petioles about 0.8-5.7 cm long, usually twisted close to the base. Upper and lower leaf blade surfaces, twigs and petioles sparsely clothed in short glandular hairs tipped with fluid when fresh. Glands 1-8 per side, usually visible on the underside of the leaf blade close to the basal margin. Lateral veins about four to six on each side of the midrib.

Flowers

Male and female flowers on same plant. Male flowers: in racemes of 4-21 flowers, or solitary; male inflorescence bracts to 3 mm long; flowers about 8-20 mm diam., excluding the fimbriations or hairs; calyx tube (hypanthium) to 35 mm long, lobes recurved, about 0.5-2.5 mm long; petals about 9-10 mm long (not including fringed tips) or 15 mm long including the fringed tips, divided into long narrow lobes particularly at the apex; stamens 3, two stamens with bilocular anthers and one stamen with a unilocular anther; anthers about 2 mm long, filaments about 0.5-1.5 mm long, free from one another; anther locules sinuous (shaped like a horizontal S); pollen white or translucent. Female flowers: solitary or paired; from same axils as male flowers; similar in general form to the male flowers, calyx tube (hypanthium) 12-50 mm long, sepal lobes 1-3 mm long; petals 5-10 mm long; staminodes small and inconspicuous; style about as long as the hypanthium.

Fruit

Fruits elongated globular or globose, about 21-50 x 18-25 mm, apex pointed or beaked. Seeds about 3-12 per fruit. Seed +/- flat, about 6-11 x 4-7 mm, unilocular, margin sinuate. Embryo about 8 mm long, radicle about 1 mm long, much shorter and narrower than the cotyledons.

Seedlings

Features not available.

Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in WA, NT, CYP and NEQ. Altitudinal range from near sea level to 550 m. Grows in vine thicket, monsoon forest and the drier more seasonal rain forests. Also occurs in Asia and Malesia.

Natural History & Notes

Flowers open during the day.

Synonyms

Trichosanthes cucumerina L., Linnaeus, C. von (1753) *Species Plantarum* 2: 1008. Type: Pada valam, 39, t. 15, in Rheede, Hort. Ind. Malab. 8 (1688). Fide Telford (1982). *Trichosanthes ambrozii* Domin, *Bibliotheca Botanica* 89(4): 1185(1928), Type: Northwest-Australien: zwischen Ashburton und De Gray River, E. Clement s.n.; syn: B, K, PR.

RFK Code

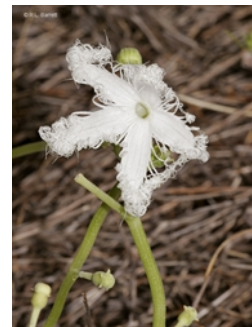
2512



Flower. © R.L. Barrett



Flower. © R.L. Barrett



Flower. © R.L. Barrett



Flowers. © CSIRO



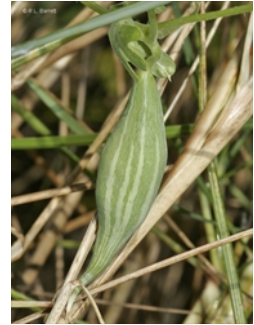
Leaves and Flowers. © CSIRO



Leaf and fruit. © R.L. Barrett



Fruit. © R.L. Barrett



Fruit. © R.L. Barrett



Leaf and fruit. © R.L. Barrett



Habit, leaves, flowers and fruit. ©
R.L. Barrett



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



Web edition hosted at <https://apps.lucidcentral.org/rainforest>