

Wikstroemia indica (L.) C.A.Mey.

Family:

Thymelaeaceae

Meyer, C.A.A. von (1843) *Bulletin de la Classe Physico-Mathematique de l'Academie Imperiale des Sciences de Saint-Petersbourg* 1: 358.

Common name:

Wikstroemia; Tie Bush

Stem

Usually flowers and fruits as a shrub 1-4 m tall.

Leaves

Leaf blades glabrous, about 9-80 x 6-30 mm, petioles short, 1-9 mm long, grooved on the upper surface. Veins obscure, difficult to distinguish. Twig bark strong, fibrous and fetid when stripped.

Flowers

Perianth tube (hypanthium) about 4-8 mm long, perianth lobes about 1.5-2 mm long. Stamens eight in two whorls one above the other on the inner surface of the perianth tube (hypanthium). Pollen orange. Disk lobed. Glands present at the base of the ovary. Style very short or absent. Stigma capitate, globular.

Fruit

Fruits ellipsoid, about 5-7 mm long, perianth remnants present at the base of the fruit. Seed surrounded by a white or pale cellular layer. Fruits and seeds emit an unpleasant hydrocyanic odour when crushed. When ripe or partly ripe a much favoured food for the Brown Cuckoo-dove (*Macropygia amboinensis*).

Seedlings

Cotyledons thick and fleshy, about 5-6 x 4 mm, petioles very short, about 1 mm long. Hypocotyl glabrous, stem above the cotyledons clothed in straight, appressed, white hairs. First pair of leaves opposite and elliptic. At the tenth leaf stage: leaves +/- elliptic, glabrous, venation obscure. Stem bark strong and fibrous when stripped. Seed germination time 17 to 42 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in NT, CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards as far as coastal central New South Wales. Altitudinal range from near sea level to 900 m. Often grows in open forest or wet sclerophyll forest but also found on rain forest margins, in rain forest regrowth, closed forest on sand dunes or some of the drier forms of rain forest. Also occurs in Asia, Malesia and the Pacific islands.

Natural History & Notes

The leaves of this species are poisonous to cattle. The fruits are more poisonous than the leaves. Cases have been reported of children dying after eating the fruits of this plant. Everist (1974).

Leaf and stem material of this species was active against some tumors. Collins et al. (1990).

This species has been used medicinally in India, Fiji and China. Cribb (1981).

Synonyms

Daphne indica L., *Species Plantarum* 1: 357(1753), Type: China; holo: LINN?. *Wikstroemia shuttleworthiana* Meisn., *Prodromus* 14(1): 544(1856). *Wikstroemia shuttleworthii* Meisn., *Denkschriften der Koniglich-Bayerischen Botanischen Gesellschaft, Regensburg* 3: 287(1841), Type: Nova Hollandia circa Sydney paucos ante annos legit Anderson. Specim. benigniter communicavit amicus cl. R. *Wikstroemia viridiflora* Meisn., *Denkschriften der Kgl. Botanischen Gesellschaft in Regensburg* 3: 286(1841), Type: (not cited).

RFK Code

3239



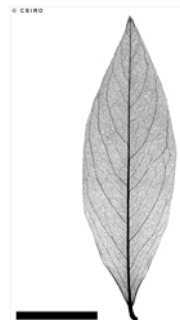
Flower and buds. © Barry Jago



Leaves and Flowers. © CSIRO



Leaves and Flowers. © CSIRO



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



Cotyledon and 1st leaf stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO



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