

Capparis ornans F.Muell. ex Benth.

Family:

Capparaceae

Bentham, G. (1863) *Flora Australiensis* 1: 95. Type: Queensland, Port Denison, E. Fitzalan; holo: K; iso: MEL.

Common name:

Caper; Caper, Showy; Showy Caper

Stem

Usually grows into a large tree-top vine but can also flower and fruit as a shrub. Vine stem diameters to 14 cm recorded. Outer bark finely fissured. A clear exudate may emerge from the pith. Heartwood brown.

Leaves

Stipules are recurved thorns about 1-3 mm long (or longer) which assist in climbing. Not present at every leaf. Leaf blades about 6-14 x 2-6.5 cm, petioles about 0.6-1.7 cm long. Lateral veins about 8-20 on each side of the midrib, forming loops inside the blade margin. Oil dots often elongated. Apex of the leaf blade ends in a thickened sharp point quite capable of penetrating the skin.

Flowers

Flowers strongly perfumed. Sepals about 2.5-3.5 cm long. Outer pair of sepals fused to form a calyptra which splits irregularly. Inner pair of sepals free from one another. Petals about 4.5 cm long, dimorphic, two long and two shorter. Stamens about 80, filaments about 8-10 cm long, anthers about 0.2 cm long. Gynophore about 6.5-10 cm long.

Fruit

Fruits globose to ovoid, about 6-10.5 x 3.5-6 cm, surface usually textured in a rather random fashion. Stalk (gynophore) about 9-10 cm long. Seeds numerous, embedded in pulp. Seeds about 9-12 mm long. Embryo tightly coiled with the cotyledons in the centre.

Seedlings

Cotyledons stipulate, ovate or elliptic, about 30-43 x 14-21 mm, petioles about 1.5-2 mm long. Cataphylls usually 1 or 2 before the first pair of true leaves, stipules spinescent. First pair of true leaves elliptic, apex aristate or pungent pointed, base obtuse, leaf blades smaller than the cotyledons, stipules needle-like, about 5-9 mm long. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade elliptic, apex aristate, base shallowly cordate. Stipules are straight spines about 7-12 mm long. Petioles and stem densely clothed in short pale hairs. Seed germination time 32 to 33 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Endemic to Queensland, occurs in NEQ, CEQ and southwards to coastal central Queensland. Altitudinal range from near sea level to 1000 m. Grows in lowland and upland rain forest on a variety of sites.

Synonyms

Busbeckea ornans F.Muell., *Fragmenta Phytographiae Australiae* 5: 156(1866).

RFK Code

2043



Leaves and flower [not vouchered]. © G. Sankowsky



Leaves and flowers [not vouchered]. © G. Sankowsky



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



Vine stem transverse section. © CSIRO

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