

Hibiscus meraukensis Hochr.

Family:
Malvaceae

Hochreutiner, B.P.G. (1908) *l'Annuaire du Conservatoire et du Jardin botaniques de Geneve* 8: 11. Type: New Guinea, Merauke, Koch 13 = 421; lecto: BO; iso: G, L. Fide Borssum Waalkes (1966).

Common name:
Merauke Hibiscus; Bush Hibiscus; Hibiscus, Bush; Hibiscus, Merauke

Stem

Flowers and fruits as a herb or shrub to about 2 m tall.

Leaves

Leaves very variable on the same plant, being lobed or not lobed, about 4-18 x 4-18 cm, usually with one or more conspicuous slit-like nectaries near the base of the midrib or basal veins on the underside of the leaf blade. Leaves usually scabrous on both the upper and lower surfaces. Leaf hairs simple and stellate. Petioles and twigs clothed in short broad-based spines. Stipules about 5 mm long.

Flowers

Pediceal about 5-10 mm long. Epicalyx segments about 9-10, linear, each about 12-19 x 0.75-1 mm. Calyx shorter than the epicalyx, about 2-16 mm long, clothed with broad-based bristles on the outer surface particularly on the nerves. Petals about 4.5 x 3 cm. Corolla usually with a purple or red centre. Staminal column about 12 mm long. Stamens attached all over the staminal tube. Anthers U-shaped. Pollen red. Stigmas hairy.

Fruit

Capsules globose, about 8-12 mm diam., clothed in sharp trichomes. Seeds about 3-4 mm diam., warty and shortly hairy on the outer surface.

Seedlings

Cotyledons suborbicular, about 11-21 x 15-23 mm, petiole about 12-13 mm long, sometimes longer than the cotyledons. First pair of leaves with toothed margin, petioles longer than the leaf blades. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf blade usually +/- 3-lobed, margin toothed, upper surface scabrous and the lower surface less so as a result of scattered hairs mainly along the midrib and major veins, stellate hairs also present on both surfaces. Stem and petiole similarly armed with scabrous hairs. Stipules linear, about 3-6 mm long with a few hairs near the apex. A raised two-lipped gland usually visible on the midrib on the underside of the leaf blade towards the base. Stem bark strong and fibrous when stripped. Seed germination time 151 to 502 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in WA, NT, CYP, NEQ, CEQ and southwards as far as south-eastern Queensland. Altitudinal range from near sea level to 900 m. Usually grows in open forest but sometimes found on the margins of monsoon forest and vine thickets. Also occurs in Malesia (New Guinea and the Moluccas).

RFK Code

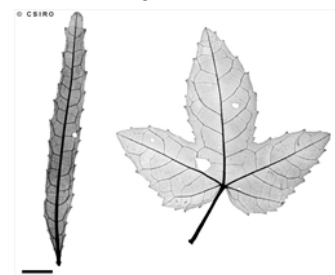
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Leaves, flower and buds. © CSIRO



Dehiscent fruit. © CSIRO



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, epigeal germination. © CSIRO



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