

Zanthoxylum rhetsa (Roxb.) DC.

Family:

Rutaceae

Candolle, A.P. de (1824) *Prodromus systematis naturalis regni vegetabilis* 1: 728.

Common name:

Indian Ivy Rue; Cape Yellowwood

Stem

Corky bumps or squat, conical prickles usually present on the trunk. Dead bark layered, mustard yellow when cut. Blaze finely layered, darkens markedly on exposure.

Leaves

Leaflet blades about 4-9 x 2-3.5 cm, leaflet stalks about 2-3 mm long. Lateral leaflets unequal-sided, particularly towards the base. Oil dots sparsely scattered in the leaflet but always present at the base of each indentation on the margin of the leaflet blade. Midrib depressed on the upper surface. Lateral veins forming definite loops inside the blade margin. Leaf scars on the twigs show three definite bundles of vascular strands.

Flowers

Inflorescence about 8-14 cm long, shorter than the leaves. Sepals about 0.5-1 mm long. Petals 1-2 mm long. Staminal filaments about 2.5-3 mm long, inserted outside the disk, anthers about 1.5 mm long. Disk irregularly lobed, about 0.5 mm high. Ovary about 1 mm long, style eccentric.

Fruit

Fruits globose, about 6-7 mm diam., surface marked by numerous oil glands. Seeds +/- globular, about 6 mm diam.

Seedlings

Cotyledons orbicular to oblong, rather thick, about 5-6 x 5 mm, margins crenate or appearing crenate because of the marginal oil dots. At the tenth leaf stage: leaf compound, with about nine leaflets. Leaflet blades with about 3-6 teeth on each side. Each tooth with a large oil dot at the base of the sinus. Compound leaf rhachis grooved on the upper surface and armed with curved red spines about 1.5 mm long. Seed germination time 137 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in WA, NT, CYP and NEQ. Altitudinal range from sea level to 200 m. Grows in monsoon forest and drier, more seasonal rain forest. Also occurs in Asia and Malesia.

Natural History & Notes

The hard black seed are collected by the children as pellets for their bamboo pea-shooters. Corner (1988).

Synonyms

Fagara rhetsa Roxb., *Fl. Ind. ed Carey & Wa.* 1: 438(1820), Type: Lectotype: Roxburgh Icones 185, cult. Bot. Gard. Calcutta. **Zanthoxylum parviflorum** Benth., *Flora Australiensis* 1: 363(1863), Type: "N. Australia. Goulburn Island, A. Cunningham; Port Essington, Armstrong; islands of the Gulf of Carpentaria, R. Brown." Lectotype: "Armstrong 569, Australia, Northern Territory."

RFK Code

878



Fruit. © R.L. Barrett



Leaf and dehiscent fruit. © R.L. Barrett



Leaf with oil dots. © R.L. Barrett



Leaves. © R.L. Barrett



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



Habit. © R.L. Barrett



Trunk. © R.L. Barrett



Trunk. © R.L. Barrett



Tubercle-based spiny trunk. ©
CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



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