

Plant of the Month - June

by Allan Carr

Callitris columellaris

coastal cypress pine/ Bribie Island pine

Pronunciation: ca-LIT-ris col-um-el-AR-ris

CUPRESSACEAE

Derivation: *Callitris*, from the Greek, *callos* – beauty, *treis* – three (referring to the beautiful three-fold arrangement of the leaf scales); *columellaris*, from the Latin, *columna* – column or pillar (referring to the prominent central column in the fruiting cones).



Habit on sand dunes



Male cones



Female fruiting cones

There are about 19 species in this genus of conifers, 17 of which are endemic in Australia, commonly known as cypress pines.

Description: *C. columellaris* is a *monoecious tree to 20 m with a dark green canopy in sandy coastal soils. Bark is grey-black, rough and furrowed, usually slightly spirally arranged and lichen covered. Timber is resistant to termites, marine borers and decay. It is found in coastal forests from around Maryborough in south-eastern Qld to the Clarence River in north-eastern NSW.

Leaves are reduced to scales to 3 mm long in whorls of three on green branchlets.

Cones: male and female reproductive structures are borne on the same plant, male – light brown, cylindrical cones up to 5 mm long at branchlet ends, female – scaly spherical cones to 20 mm from May to September.

Fruits are woody cones to 20 mm across that drop at maturity. There is a woody central column to 7 mm long, 6 cone scales evident in the photo on the right above and small 2-winged seed

*monoecious = having male and female reproductive structures in separate flowers on the same plant



Tall mature trees



Bark with lichens