

HAIRY ALECTRYON

Alternative name: Hairy Bird's Eye, Red Jacket, Native Rambutan

FAMILY: SAPINDACEAE

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Alectryon tomentosus*



Form and size:

Small to medium tree up to 8 - 15 m

Leaves:

Compound leaves 7-20 cm long with leaflets at the base much smaller than those at the end. Usually regularly toothed

Adult leaf -

Topside: sometimes smooth but more often finely hairy

Underside: dense cover of minute whitish hairs with brown hairy buds



Bark:

Smooth, dark grey

Flowers:

Clusters of small pale creamy pink to reddish flowers





Flowering Period:

May to August

Fruit:

Brown hairy capsule, 1-3 lobed, opening to reveal the red aril (extra seed covering) and shiny black seeds.

	<p>Ripe in June to November</p> <p>Aril - This is the fleshy brightly coloured covering around the seed</p> <p>Seeds - TOXIC - are cyanide collectors. They are unlikely to be dangerous if swallowed whole, but could be if crushed and chewed.</p>
<p>Ecological notes</p>	<p>Food for Green Catbird, various butterflies and host tree for the Leptocoris tagalicus bug, the caterpillar of the Hairy Line-Blue <i>Erysichton lineata</i>, Large Purple Line-blue <i>Nacaduba berenic</i>, Small-tailed Line-blue <i>Prosotas felderi</i>, Glistening Blue <i>Sahulana scintillata</i> and Pencilled-blues <i>Candalides spp.</i></p>  <p>Leptocoris tagalicus bug</p>
<p>Cultivation:</p>	<p>Propagation is quite easy but not reliable. Seed ready to pick from fleshy aril in late winter early spring.</p>
<p>Distribution:</p>	<p>Endemic to Australia. Located in large parts of eastern Australia, from northern Queensland to the Hunter Valley in central New South Wales. This species grows naturally in all types of rainforest in the subtropical and tropical regions of eastern Australia.</p> 
<p>OTHER INFORMATION</p> <p>Disclaimer: <i>Rotary Club of Capricorn Coast can not take any responsibility for any adverse effects from the use of plants. Always seek advice from a professional before ingesting any part of a plant or using a plant medicinally.</i></p> <p>Hairy Alectryon is regarded as an emerging environmental weed in those parts of New South Wales that are outside its native range.</p> <p>It is one of the few rainforest trees to fruit heavily in Winter. It is a prolific dry rainforest pioneer, extremely hardy and can withstand dry periods.</p>	

QUIZ TIME

- 1. What colour are the aril and the seeds?**
 - a. red and black
 - b. blue and black
 - c. yellow and red
 - d. white and green

- 2. In which state is the Hairy Alectryon considered an emerging environmental pest?**
 - a. Tasmania
 - b. New South Wales
 - c. Northern Territory
 - d. South Australia

- 3. What toxic chemical does the seeds contain?**
 - a. lead
 - b. mercury
 - c. asbestos
 - d. cyanide

ANSWERS:

1. A
2. B
3. D

REFERENCES

CSIRO. (2020). *Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants*.

Melzer, R., & Plumb, J. (2011). *Plants of Capricornia*. Belgamba.

Williams, P., Kirkpatrick, S., Griffith University. Centre for Coastal Management, & Gold Coast (Qld.). Council. (2009). *Coastal Plant Pocket Guide*. Griffith Centre for Coastal Management.

Image 1

Gerus, T. (2008). *Alectryon tomentosus* fruit.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/tgerus/2882164870>

Image 2

Alectryon tomentosus mature tree.

<https://ppnn.org.au/plantlist/alectryon-tomentosus/>

Image 3

Whyte, R. *Alectryon tomentosus* leaves.

<https://sown.com.au/alectryon-tomentosus-sapindaceae-hairy-alectryon/>

Image 4

Whyte, R. *Alectryon tomentosus* flowers.

<https://sown.com.au/alectryon-tomentosus-sapindaceae-hairy-alectryon/>

Image 5

Whyte, R. (2010). *Leptocoris tagalicus* bug.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/soapberrybug/4559167694>

Image 6

The Australasian Virtual Herbarium. (2022). *Alectryon tomentosus*.

https://avh.ala.org.au/occurrences/search?taxa=Alectryon+tomentosus#tab_mapView