

Desmos wardianus (F.M.Bailey) Jessup

Family:

Annonaceae

Jessup, L.W. (1984) *Austrobaileya* 2(3): 227.

Common name:

Niadoo

Stem

Grows into a tree-top vine, stem diameters to 8 cm recorded, but can flower and fruit as a shrub. Vascular rays in the wood rather fine but more obvious in the bark when viewed in transverse section.

Leaves

Younger leaf bearing twigs clothed in sparse, pale, prostrate hairs. Twig bark strong and fibrous when stripped. Oak grain visible in cross sections of the twigs. Leaf blades oblong-elliptic, about 4-8.5 x 1-3 cm, slightly glaucous on the underside. Petioles about 3-6 mm long, shallowly grooved on the upper surface. Two minute lobes present at the base of the leaf blade, one on either side of the midrib. Lateral veins not very obvious. Terminal buds clothed in prostrate shiny reddish-brown hairs. Tendrils are modified branches.

Flowers

Inflorescences leaf-opposed. Ovaries (carpels) 15 or more per flower. Ovules up to 5 per ovary.

Fruit

Each fruiting carpel on a comparatively long stalk, about 10-20 mm long. Fruit consists of about 15 fruiting carpels each with 1-4 seeds. Carpels sometimes moniliform. Seeds brown, about 6-7 x 5-6 mm. Endosperm deeply ruminant (i.e. to the middle of the seed) embryo small, about 0.5-1.0 mm long. Cotyledons slightly wider than the radicle.

Seedlings

First pair of leaves elliptic, apex obtuse, base obtuse, upper surface glabrous, lower surface +/- glaucous, clothed in appressed hairs which are visible with a lens. Oil dots visible from the upper surface only. Stems and terminal buds clothed in shiny brown prostrate hairs. At the tenth leaf stage: leaves alternate rather than spirally arranged. Leaf blade elliptic to lanceolate, apex bluntly pointed, base cordate, upper surface glabrous, lower surface sparsely clothed in appressed rusty or ginger hairs. Midrib +/- flush with the upper surface. Lateral veins not forming very definite loops inside the blade margin. Stems and terminal buds clothed in rusty brown or ginger hairs. Seed germination time 147 days.

Distribution and Ecology

Endemic to Australia, occurs in NT and CYP. Altitudinal range from near sea level to about 500 m. Usually grows as a vine in monsoon forest or in gallery forests.

Natural History & Notes

Food plant for the larval stages of the Fourbar Swordtail, Green Spotted Triangle and the Pale Green Triangle Butterflies. Sankowsky & Neilsen (2000).

Synonyms

Unona wardiana F.M.Bailey, *The Queensland Flora* 6: 1996(1902), Type: Queensland, Mapoon, 22 May 1901, J.F. Bailey; holo: BRI.

RFK Code

2116



Leaves and fruit. © CSIRO



Leaves and fruit. © Australian Plant Image Index (APII).
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Habit. © G. Sankowsky



Scale bar 10mm. © CSIRO



10th leaf stage. © CSIRO



Cotyledon stage, durian germination. © CSIRO



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