

Red Ash / Soap Tree



S Robins



S & A Pearson



S von Fahland

FAMILY: Rhamnaceae

HABIT: A small to medium tree which can be fairly open or have a well rounded crown.

LEAVES: Alternate, oblong, notched or pointed at the apex, 5-14cm long; dark, shiny green above and white beneath with brownish-green veins.

FLOWER/FRUIT: The dense clusters of white, fragrant summer flowers are followed by dry, globular, black fruits with a transverse ridge above the base. The outer fruit sheds to expose two very hard, tiny, red brown seeds. Seeds stay attached to the tree for several months.

PROPAGATION: Fresh or stored seed. The seed needs to be scarified and hot water treated before sowing.

LOCAL HABITAT: It is very common on margins of littoral and dry rainforest as well as in scrub and open woodland.

DISTRIBUTION: Eastern Queensland, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Western Australia and overseas.

GENERAL: Insectivorous birds love this fast growing pioneer tree which also provides good forage for stock. Bark has been used for tanning and Aborigines used crushed leaves and fruit as a fish poison.

Buds and young stems are brown, hairy and produce a faint liniment odour when broken.

Fruit eaten by birds.

REFERENCES: Alcock & Champion, 1989 *One Hundred and One Trees of Mackay*.