

Flame tree



FAMILY: Sterculiaceae

HABIT: Medium to large deciduous tree; tends to have a pyramid shape when grown in the open. The trunks of young trees are green and smooth and are mid-grey with shallow fissures on mature trees.

LEAVES: Alternate, oblong-lanceolate, margins entire or three, five to seven lobed and 30x25cm long.

FLOWER/FRUIT: Trees are usually leafless or almost so at flowering time; the red, bell-shaped flowers, borne in much branched sprays can completely clothe the tree in red for a long period in summer. Fruits are boat-shaped, hard, black folicles about 12cm long and contain rows of hard black-brown seeds encased in a bristly yellowish cover.

PROPAGATION: From seed. Beware of irritant bristles.

LOCAL HABITAT: Rainforest.

DISTRIBUTION: Irregular occurrence along the east coast from Wollongong, New South Wales to Cooktown, Queensland.

GENERAL: An attractive ornamental tree. Seed pods have been used to make a dye. A rainforest species, preferring sheltered situations.

REFERENCES: Harden, Mc Donald & Williams 2006 *Rainforest trees and shrubs; a field guide to their identification*. Alcock & Champion, 1989 *One Hundred and One Trees of Mackay*.