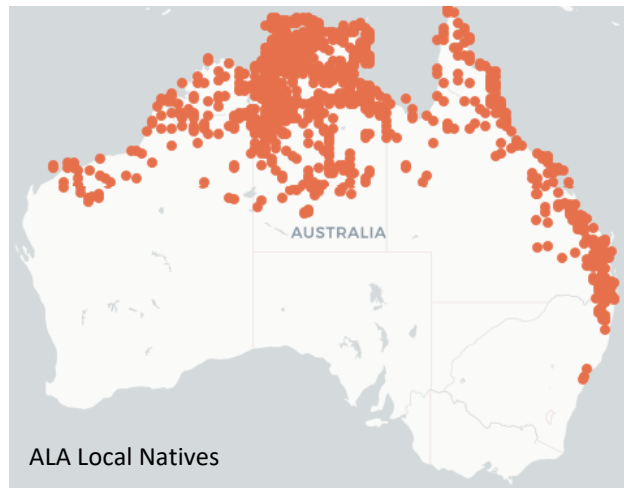


Menispermaceae
Tinospora smilacina
 arrow-head vine, snake vine

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ETYMOLOGY

(ty-NOS-por-a) Miers. 1851 Greek *tinós* = very small dwarfish + *sporos* = seeds because the seeds are small; The species *Smilax* = *convolvulus* + *inus* = like. referring to twining habit; Vine 4-5m long

LIFEFORM

STATUS

NSW TSCA: Endangered; Endemic to Australia, Widespread tropical species in Cape York Peninsula, NEQ, CEQ and southwards as far as north-eastern NSW, Nickol Bay Carnarvon N P Q, Richmond River NSW, Nickol Bay WA, Ormiston Gorge, Tanami Desert, Jim Jim Falls NT

OCCURS

QLD DISTRICTS

HABITAT

LEAVES

Burke, Burnett, Cook, Leichhardt, Moreton, North/South Kennedy, Port Curtis, Wide Bay Inland sandplains, Vine thicket, rocky hills

Alternate, 2-18 x 5.5-14 cm, fleshy, ovate-triangular, shiny thick, heart-shaped, apex acute or bluntly pointed, base contracted truncate or slightly cordate to hastate, lobes rounded on 1-12 cm stalks (petioles);

FLOWERS

Dioecious, Petals 1-1.3 mm, creamy-yellow green, Stamens 3-4 mm, inner sepals 3-4mm in 4-8 cm racemes or clusters, above the leaf axils. **Flowering times** All year

FRUIT

Drupes, 6-10 x 4-6 mm, ellipsoid, ovoid, fleshy red-black, endocarps 7-8 mm, rugose, produced in groups of 3 with 1 seed; similar tasting to domestic grape

Fruiting times Feb, March, April, May, June

BARK

STEM

Thin pale to white corky bark with lenticels, woody taproots are yellow brown skinned; Vigorous woody slender climbing vine, more or less deciduous, succulent stem with aerial flexuose, exudes milky latex when bruised, succulent or pithy touch stems; flexible stems maybe used as bush string to tie up yams firewood for carrying;

ETHNOBOTANY

Poisonous to stock. Medicinally (mashed stem) used mostly as painkiller. Bark gives positive tests for poisonous alkaloids, antibacterial & antipyretic. Leaves heated & applied to sores to draw out infection or applied to head to treat headaches. Stem heated & softened & used as a bandage for painful limbs joints or feet. Roots heated & mashed applied to marine stings & treat boils. Substances have some antibacterial & antipyretic action mainly for the treatment of headaches, rheumatoid arthritis and other inflammatory disorders, and for snakebite. For headaches, mashed stems were wrapped around the head. For stings and bites, heated leaves were applied.

INSECTS

Food plant for destructive *Eudocima materna* dot-underwing moth *Othreis fullonica*, *Othreis jordani*, (fruit-piercing moth) *Rhytia cocalus*, *Khadira aurantia*

BIRD

Fruit eaten by brown cuckoo-dove, mistletoebirds

INDIGENOUS USES

Flexible stems used as bush string to tie up firewood etc for carrying; Plant used medicinally by Aborigines External application for gastro-intestinal disorders pain Skin: sores, boils, cuts scabies etc. Poultice for joint and muscle pain & headaches. Internal symptoms of colds and flu: leaves chewed for severe cold; heated leaves & stems are pounded between stones then bound around head for headache. Leaves heated and mashed to make a poultice to ease pain for stonefish & stingray stings;

ID FEATURE

Leaves triangular to ovate + Petals 1-1.3 mm. Stamens 3-4 mm, inner sepals 3-4mm