

Malvaceae

Hibiscus heterophyllus

native rosella

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ALA Local Natives



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ETYMOLOGY

(hy-BIS-cus) Greek hibiscos = marsh-mallow; The species heterophyllus = from hetero = different + phyllon = a leaf referring to the great variation in leaf shape on the same plant

LIFEFORM

Tree 5-10m x 2m

Longevity: 10-40 years

STATUS

Southern geographical limit Kiama NSW Recorded @ 670 Locations

OCCURS

Cooktown N Qld to Ourimbah, Colo River, Kurrajong NSW

QLD DISTRICTS

Burnett, Cook, Leichhardt, Moreton, North/South Kennedy, Port Curtis, Wide Bay

HABITAT

Gullies, Riverbanks, Slopes, Ridges

LEAVES

Alternate, 6-14 cm, roundish dagger-shaped when entire or deeply lobed, dark green rough with irregular toothed margins.

FLOWERS

15 cm, whitish pink, 5 large scented petals with red centre; last only for 1 day.

Flowering Times: Aug, Oct, Sept, Nov, Dec, Jan

FRUIT

Capsules, 1.5-2 cm, oval, covered in long straight bristly hairs (rosella-like) partly surrounded by the calyx. **Fruiting Times:** Dec, Jan, Feb, March

BARK

Grey brown hard thick with black vertical fissures on large trees

STEM

Spiny branches, usually straight & cylindrical glabrous stems.

ETHNOBOTANY

Edible young roots/shoots, Fodder, leaves branches and bark readily eaten by cattle, especially in winter when quality of feed is poor; Wood white to pale yellow soft easy to work open grain, tough perishable used for musical instruments (good conductor of sound);

LANDSCAPE USE

Ornamental potential usage in landscaping with scented flowers

INSECTS

Coenotes eremophilae, *Earias perhuegeli*, *Onebala hibisci*, *Pectinophora endema*, *Phyllonorycter stephanota*, *Plectophila discalis*, *Xanthodes congenita*, *X. transversa* (Moths)

INDIGENOUS USES

Leaves shoots, roots & buds eaten raw, leaves are very sour but boiled (lose acidity) provides excellent spinach substitute; Bark fibre used in Dilly-bags (Abor); Also rope fishing lines, twine for nets and thread; Bark contains mucilage.

ID FEATURES

Calyx densely stellate-pubescent indumentum distinctly coloured (straw to rust when dry)