

Rhamnaceae

Alphitonia excelsa

soapy ash other coopers wood, Humbug, Leatherjacket, Red Almond, Sarsaperilla, Red Tweedie.



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ETYMOLOGY

(al-fit-O-nee-a) Greek alphitonia = baked barley meal ref. to the red mealy matter around the seeds; The species excelsa = tall.

LIFEFORM

Tree 10m x 5m spread

STATUS

Conservation status is common

OCCURS

Springsure Q, Acacia Ck NSW, Rainbow Cliffs NT, WA

HABITAT

Open forest, Dry, Subtropical Rainforest Microphyll /Notophyll Semi-evergreen Vine Forest

LEAVES

Alternate, 3-15 x 2-5 cm, blunt base wedge-edge rolled under, dark glossy green above, white with velvety hairs below, lighter green laterale veins in raised loop towards edge,

FLOWERS

Cream, 2-6 mm, scented, 5 petals, bisexual, in panicles near the ends of the branches:

Flowering Times Feb, March, April, May, June

FRUIT

Dupes, 5-15 mm, broadly ovoid, round, black with red hard 2-4mm seeds dark brown, covered by a thin dark orange-red shiny skin aril. **Fruiting Times** May, June, July

BARK

Whitish grey

TRUNK or STEM

Small to medium-sized tree with cylindrical trunks. Regenerates from underground stems.

ETHNOBOTANY

Whitish grey bark used for tanning. Detergent, antiseptic, glucoside, various parts contain triterpenoids, alphitonin & 4% tannins; Timber soft orange or red used of turning & carving, general building flooring tool handles and cases. Dyes cloth red-brown or orange-yellow, Ornamental potential usage in landscaping.

LANDSCAPE USES

MISTLETOE

Host plant for *Amyema conspicuum*

WILDLIFE

Food plant for Grey-headed Flying-fox, Brushtail Possums(leaves/fruit/flowers)

INSECTS

Wattle Ring-barking Beetle, Twig Girdling Longicorn

NATIVE BEES

Trigona carbonaria *Exoneura lawsoni*, *Leiproctus cristatus*, *Amphylaeus nubilosellus*, *Hyaleus cyanophilus*, *H. jacksoniae*, *H. rotundiceps*, *Homalictus brisbanensis*, *H. flindersi*, *H. megastigmus*, *Pachyprosopis* sp., *Heterapoides* spp, *Lasioglossum* spp

BIRD

Australian King Parrots, Crimson Rosella, Rose-crowned Pigeon, Pied Currawongs, Figbird, White-headed Pigeon, Brown Fruit-dove, Olive-backed Orioles, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Brown Pigeons, Cockatoos

BUTTERFLY

Psychonotis caelius taygetus Small Green-banded Blue, *Cupha prosope* Bordered Rustic, *Hypochrysops apelles* Copper Jewel, *Hypochrysops ignitus* Fiery Jewel, *Rapala varuna simsoni*, *Hypochrysops delicia* Moonlight Jewel

MOTHS

Enetus mirabilis, *Bucculatrix gossypii*, *Carmenta chrysophanes*, Clearwing Moth *Casbia rectoria* Pomaderris Moth, *Opodiphthera astrophela*, Emperor Moth, *Leucoptera* sp

INDIGENOUS USES

Bark, roots & leaves as infusion used variously for toothache, headache and upset stomach., Crushed leaves & fruit as fish poison. Bathe with crushed leaves in water.

ID FEATURE

Leaves 2.2-4.6 times longer than wide, white on underside, apex mostly acute + styles 0.8-1.2 mm after elongation + Mature fruits 7-10 mm + seeds 4-5.7 mm;