



1. Habit growing in bushland. 2. Glossy green upper leaf surfaces. 3. Mature olive-like fruit. 4. Close-up of flower clusters.



Satinleaf (*Chrysophyllum oliviforme*)

Introduced

Not Declared

Satinleaf is a small tree of the Sapotaceae plant family native to Central America, the Caribbean and south-eastern Florida. It is occasionally planted as an ornamental tree in eastern Australia, as well as by rare fruit enthusiasts, and is beginning to spread into nearby bushland.

Distribution

This species is relatively rare in cultivation in Australia, however it has been recorded becoming naturalised on a handful of occasions in recent years in south-eastern Queensland and north-eastern NSW. There are a few herbarium records from the Brisbane area in the last 5 years, but additional sightings have also been made in Brisbane and other parts of sub-tropical eastern Australia (e.g. at Ballina, Lismore and the Gold Coast). The majority of naturalised plants are still relatively young, and have not yet produced flowers or fruit. For this reason Satinleaf is often misidentified as a similar native species.

Description

Satinleaf is a small tree usually growing 3-7 m tall, but occasionally reaches up to 10 m in height. Its older trunks are covered in brown scaly bark, while its younger stems and new growth is densely covered in rusty coloured hairs. The alternately arranged leaves are oval in shape (3-12 cm long and 2-5 cm wide) and borne on stalks 5-17 mm long. These leaves have entire margins and sharply-pointed tips. Their upper surfaces are dark-green, shiny, and hairless, while their undersides are densely covered in rusty-brown hairs that give them a coppery appearance.

The small bell-shaped flowers are arranged in clusters in the upper leaf forks, each cluster containing 5-10 flowers. Each of the pale yellowish to greenish-white flowers is borne on a short stalk 3-8 mm long. They have five petals (3-5 mm long), that are fused together at the base into a short tube, and five stamens. The fleshy fruit closely resembles an olive and turns dark purple or blackish when mature. These fruit (1-3 cm long and 7-10 mm wide) contain a single large hard seed (13-15 mm long) surrounded by whitish flesh.

Quick Facts

- > Small tree growing up to 10 m tall
- > New growth and leaf undersides densely covered in reddish-brown hairs
- > Small flowers arranged in dense clusters in the leaf forks
- > Fleshy, dark purple or black, olive-shaped fruit (1-3 cm long)

Habitat

Satinleaf is a potential weed of riparian vegetation, forest gaps and margins, urban bushland and disturbed sites in the wetter tropical and sub-tropical regions of Australia. It has also been found in the understorey of relatively intact forests.





1. Seedling. 2. Rusty-coloured leaf undersides.

Reproduction and Dispersal

This species reproduces only by seed, which are probably spread into bushland by larger fruit-eating birds (e.g. figbirds). Hence, it usually becomes established under trees where birds roost. In northern NSW seedlings have been observed becoming established up to 1 km away from parent trees.

Why is it an Emerging Threat?

Satinleaf has recently been reported becoming naturalised in the understorey of riparian vegetation in northern Brisbane, on the margins of a paperbark swamp-forest and other remnant forests in northern NSW, and in the understorey of disturbed eucalypt forest in southern Brisbane. It seems to grow well in shaded environments, and has the potential to replace native understorey species.

Control Methods

Seedlings and young saplings can be removed by hand. Larger plants can be manually removed with the aid of suitable tools, but attention must be taken to remove the entire crown.

There is no information readily available on the control of Satinleaf with herbicides. However, some products are able to be used for the control of woody environmental weeds in Queensland via APVMA off-label Permit 11463 (see <http://permits.apvma.gov.au/PERI1463.PDF>). For example, some formulations of triclopyr + picloram, fluroxypyr or 2,4-D may be applied as a foliar spray directly to the target plants. Alternatively, other formulations of these same chemicals and formulations of Glyphosate can be applied as a cut stump or basal bark application. However, plants growing along waterways should only be controlled with herbicides that have an aquatic registration (e.g. Round-up Biactive or Weedmaster Duo). Please read the off-label permit carefully for the exact products and rates to use and, unless otherwise stated in the permit, the use of these products must be in accordance with the instructions on their labels. Within other state boundaries, it is recommended that all managers consult any relevant permits or government legislation applicable to their region.

Look a-likes

Satinleaf is very similar to Star apple (*Chrysophyllum cainito*) and Brown pearwood (*Niemeyera antiloga*) when not in flower or fruit. Brown pearwood is a native rainforest tree distinguished by its stalkless flowers and rounded fruit (3-5 cm across). Star apple is another introduced tree with larger round fruit (4-7 cm across) and some rusty-coloured hairs on the upper surfaces of its younger leaves.



Top. Young leaves with hairy upper surfaces.

Bottom. Large rounded mature fruit of Star apple.

The control methods referred to in Weed Watch™ should be used in accordance with the restrictions (federal and state legislation and local government laws) directly or indirectly related to each control method. These restrictions may prevent the utilisation of one or more of the methods referred to, depending on individual circumstances. While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, Technigro does not invite reliance upon it, nor accept responsibility for any loss or damage caused by actions based on it.

This information has been developed with the assistance of Dr Sheldon Navie. Photographs are also courtesy of Dr Sheldon Navie © Technigro Australia Pty Ltd 2012