



1. Habit with new leaves in spring. 2. Pointed leaves with reddish new growth. 3. Three-lobed mature fruit capsules. 4. Older trunk with fissured bark.



Chinese Tallow Tree (*Triadica sebifera*)

Introduced

Not Declared

As its name suggests, Chinese Tallow Tree is thought to have originated in China, but it is possibly also native to Japan and Taiwan. This member of the Euphorbiaceae plant family is commonly cultivated as a street tree in the sub-tropical and warmer temperate regions of Australia.

Distribution

The first naturalised specimen of Chinese Tallow Tree in Australia was collected at Chermside in Brisbane in 1928. Since then, several other collections have been made in other parts of south-eastern Queensland (i.e. along Cabbage Tree Creek and Downfall Creek in Brisbane, at Maryborough, and near Dayboro). More recently, it has been reported from local parks in Brisbane (e.g. Anzac Park at Toowong and Beryl Roberts Park in Coopers Plains) and spreading from plantings at Forest Lake. Most disturbingly, in October 2000, a dense infestation of thousands of Chinese Tallow Trees was reported from along the edge of a lake in the Casino district in northern NSW.

Description

A small to medium-sized deciduous tree usually growing about 10 m tall, but occasionally reaching up to 15 m in height. Its trunk and older stems are covered in rough grey bark that is deeply fissured. The leaves are alternately arranged along the stems and borne on stalks 2-6 cm long. These leaves are relatively broad (3-8 cm long and 3-7 cm wide) with very pointed tips. They have dark green upper surfaces and pale green undersides, but turn yellow or reddish in colour before they are shed in autumn. New growth in spring is often also reddish-tinged. There are two minute disc-shaped glands near where the leaf stalk meets the base of the leaf.

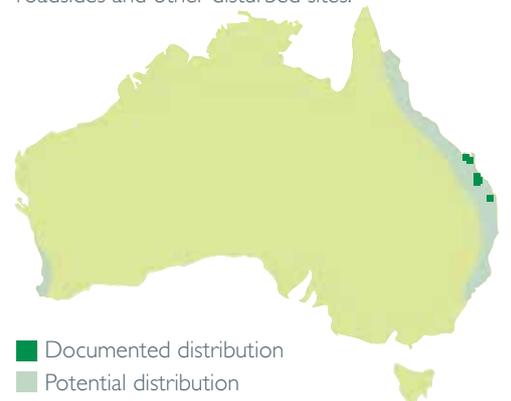
Chinese Tallow Tree produces separate male and female flowers on the same plant (i.e. it is monoecious) in spring. These tiny yellowish coloured flowers are arranged in elongated clusters (4-14 cm long) at the tips of the branches, and do not have any obvious petals. The female flowers are usually found at the base of the flower clusters, while the remainder of the cluster is made up of male flowers. The fruit is a three-lobed capsule (9-13 mm across) that is green when young, but turns brown or almost black at maturity. It splits open in late summer or autumn to reveal three whitish seeds (7-8 mm long and 5-7 mm wide).

Quick Facts

- > A deciduous tree growing up to 15m tall
- > Broad alternately-arranged leaves with pointed tips
- > Tiny yellow flowers borne in elongated clusters in spring
- > Three-lobed capsules that split open to reveal three white seeds

Habitat

Chinese Tallow Tree can invade a wide variety of habitats, from full sun to relatively shady. It is most often found growing near water (i.e. along waterways, near the shores of ponds and lakes, and in swampy or wetland sites), but also invades roadsides and other disturbed sites.





1. Habit without any leaves in winter. 2. Flower cluster with immature fruit beginning to develop.

Reproduction and Dispersal

This species reproduces by seed and also produces suckers from cut stumps or roots. Larger trees can produce up to 100,000 seeds, which are most commonly spread by birds but can also float on water. Seeds are also spread in dumped garden waste.

Why is it an Emerging Threat?

Chinese Tallow Tree is capable of forming dense thickets that quickly displace native species. It is also known to change soil chemical properties and transform the composition and structure of invaded plant communities. Since being introduced into the US in 1776, it has spread widely and is now a very serious problem in certain states. For example, forestry surveys in Louisiana in 2005 estimated that the number of Chinese Tallow Trees present in the forested areas of that state at 280 million.

Chinese Tallow Tree is listed as a Class 3 Noxious Weed in the North Coast area of NSW and must not be grown in that region.

Control Methods

Seedlings and young plants can be removed manually, while larger trees may require treatment with herbicide. As with many species in the Euphorbia family, Chinese Tallow Tree has a milky sap that is toxic to humans. Hence, protective clothing, including gloves, should be worn to prevent the sap coming into contact with the skin or eyes.

Mechanical control is not recommended because plants will vigorously sucker from their roots. Herbicides such as triclopyr, glyphosate, imazapyr and hexazinone are recommended to control this species in the USA. No herbicides are specifically registered for the control of Chinese Tallow Tree in Australia, but Vigilant Gel is registered for the control of woody weeds in native vegetation, conservation areas, gullies, reserves and parks (using the cut-stump method).

Woody environmental weeds may also be controlled in Queensland with some herbicides as outlined in APVMA off-label Permit 11463 (see <http://permits.apvma.gov.au/PER11463.PDF>). For example, some formulations of glyphosate and triclopyr + picloram can be applied as a cut stump or basal bark application. 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 any of these herbicides must be in accordance with the instructions on their labels. Within other state boundaries, it is recommended that any relevant permits or government legislation applicable to the region be consulted.

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 2013

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Look a-likes

The Bleeding Heart or Native Poplar (*Homalanthus nutans*) is very similar in appearance to Chinese Tallow Tree. However, this native species is not deciduous (i.e. it does not lose all of its leaves in winter) and only the older leaves turn red before being shed. Bleeding Heart can also be distinguished by its two-lobed fruit capsule.



Top. Two-lobed fruit and reddish older leaves.

Bottom. New growth of Bleeding Heart with prominent pale green stipules.