

Tristaniopsis laurina

Water Gum



Family
Myrtaceae

Common Name
Water Gum

Distribution
East coast Australia and ranges north from Victoria into Qld. In HSC Communities O1 (107.9 ha), RF1 (5.9 ha), and larger creek-lines of L1 (837.3 ha).

Derivation of Name
Tristaniopsis Latin, Tristania after the French botanist Jules de Tristan (1776-1861), opsis Greek, meaning like. laurina Latin, Laurus - the Laurel or Bay Tree for its similarity.

Conservation Status
Although Water Gum occurs commonly throughout the HSC area in many of the larger sandstone gully creek lines, its habitat is highly threatened from displacement by exotic vegetation, in particular Privet, Ligustrum spp.

Description
Generally a flood battered, bent, multi trunked tree to around 12m in HSC area. Away from flood damage it can attain taller dimensions and be a single trunked tree. The trunk is smooth with patches of scaly bark often shaded different colours in brown and grey hues. The foliage is deep glossy green in appearance paler on the under surface and slightly hairy underneath. Leaves are usually 6.5–12 cm long, 15–30 mm wide, oblanceolate in shape and alternately arranged. Bright yellow flowers appear in summer in short axillary clusters followed by slightly woody capsules which are ripe in winter.

Longevity
Over 100 years.

Horticultural Merit and uses
Water Gum has a long history of successful use as a horticultural plant. It is a relatively small tree in cultivation generally low branched and can be multi trunked giving it a thick appearance; otherwise formative pruning to develop a single trunk is advisable. Provided the ground is well drained it performs well in a wide range soils; it may require extra water in extended periods of drought. It tolerates shaded conditions but growth is more rapid in full sun conditions. The bright yellow flowers are quite showy in summer time when many other plants have little flowering occurring. In cooler weather the older leaves may turn bright red before shedding.

Fauna Value
Flowering attracts a wide range of summer insects to this tree which feed on nectar and pollen. Foliage browsed by possums.

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