

Ironwood

Nestegis apetala

FACT SHEET NATIVE PLANT SPECIES OF NORFOLK ISLAND

Native to Norfolk Island, the Ironwood is from the *Olceaceae* family.

Description

A medium sized tree that usually inhabits the mid canopy of Norfolk forests. Growing to 6 or 7m tall, the ironwood has dark green shiny leaves that are arranged in opposite pairs, perpendicular to each other along the stem.

Leaves are elliptical shaped, (4-12cm long) with their distinguishing feature being the light green/yellow midrib that runs down the leaf centre and continues to the petiole (leaf stem). Fresh growth is also a vibrant yellow/green colour.

Flowers in groups of up to 21 grow on racemes from the leaf axils or directly from the stem. These develop into bunches of fruit (9mm long) that ripen to red, yellow or purple.

Distribution

Naturally regenerating where cattle are not present, this species can readily be found in the hardwood forests across Norfolk. It will readily self-propagate beneath adult trees and where birds spread their seed. Can be found on ridges, in valleys and across most of the island.



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Growing conditions

Young trees do well in partial shade with protection from the wind. Adults can be found in the full sun but often are part of the mid canopy in the forest.

Propagation

Collect fruit when ripe and coloured between June-October. Can be readily propagated at home from seed after cleaning. More information can be found in *"A guide to propagating Norfolk Island's native plants and seeds"*, available from the National Parks office (see link at right).

Look-alikes

The Ironwood can easily be mistaken for the native Sharkwood (*Dysoxylum bijugum*). Individual leaves look similar with the distinct pale mid-rib, however their structure differs.

Where Ironwood leaves grow in opposite pairs, perpendicular to each other along the stem, the Sharkwood has compound leaves with pairs arranged adjacent to each other.

Further information

For further information about propagation of Norfolk Island native plants and seeds, follow the link to Norfolk Island National Park website below:

<https://www.nespthreatenedspecies.edu.au/media/nlohxpnp/a-guide-to-propagating-norfolk-island-seeds-and-plants-2021.pdf>

