

COTTONWOOD

Alternative name: Cotton Tree, Beach Hibiscus, Native Hibiscus, Sea Hibiscus

FAMILY: MALVACEAE

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Hibiscus tiliaceus*



Form and size:

Spreading tree to about 10m
Dense, shady canopy with branches that often reach the ground

Leaves:

Large, simple, alternate, soft heart-shape or round in shape, 10 -15cm in diameter
Adult leaf -
Topside: dark green
Underside: whitish with dense cover of hairs

Bark:

Grey, thick, very hard
Mature trees may develop vertical fissures

Flowers:

Yellow flowers with burgundy 'throat'
5 petals

Flowering Period:

September to May

Fruit:

Light brown seeds from globular, hairy capsules
Capsules split into 5 segments and 10 cells of seeds at maturity
February to October



Ecological notes:

Larval food plant for Shining Oakblue Butterfly, Bright Oakblue Butterfly, Pink Spotted Bollworm Moth and other moths.
Main native food plant for sap-sucking Hibiscus Harlequin Bug.

Cultivation:

Grow from seed or cuttings.

Distribution:

Queensland.

Shorelines, mangrove edges, along tidal streams, brackish swamps and in other sites where soil is moist



OTHER INFORMATION

Disclaimer: Rotary Club of Capricorn Coast can not take any responsibility for any adverse effects from the use of plants. Always seek advice from a professional before ingesting any part of a plant or using a plant medicinally.

Australian Aboriginal people used the Cottonwood for many various reasons.

Timber: Valued for boat building, fish-net floats and firewood.

Bark: Fibres from soaked bark could be made in dilly bags, fishing lines, nets and ropes for dugong and turtle harpoons.

QUIZ TIME

1. How many segments do the capsules split into?
 - a. 5
 - b. 10
2. What insect sucks the sap of the Cottonwood?
 - a. Praying Mantis
 - b. Hibiscus Harlequin Bug
 - c. aphid
 - d. leafhopper
3. What is the general shape is the leaves of the Cottonwood:

- a. oblong
- b. tubular
- c. triangular
- d. heart-shaped

ANSWERS:

1. A
2. B



3. D

REFERENCES

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Image 1

Osborne, J. (2016). *Hibiscus tiliaceus* (Coastal Hibiscus).

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/theylooklikeus/33043642842>

Image 2

Starr, F. and Starr, K. (2001). *Hibiscus tiliaceus* (habit)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Starr_010309-0520_Hibiscus_tiliaceus.jpg

Image 3

Barritt, M. (2018). *Hibiscus tiliaceus* seed pods.

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Image 4

The Australasian Virtual Herbarium. (2021). *Hibiscus tiliaceus*.

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