

# WHITE CEDAR

**Alternative name:** Tulip Cedar, Persian Lilac, Karabil, Chinaberry Tree, China Berry, Cape Lilac

**FAMILY:** MELIACEAE

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Melia azedarach*



**Form and size:**

Small to medium tree, with shady canopy to 6-35m  
Unusually, it is a winter deciduous tree

**Leaves:**

Alternate, bipinnate leaflets with 9-70 leaflets  
Leaflets opposite ovate or lobed, 2-5cm  
Glossy green  
Deciduous; leafless for a period between June and August

**Bark:**

Brown with greyish ridges, fissured

**Flowers:**

Large panicles (a loose branching cluster of flowers) with lilac bisexual flowers with purple staminal tube that is fringed at the top  
Subtle fragrance





**Flowering Period:**

August to December

**Fruit:**

**TOXIC to humans**  
Yellow globular to ovoid drupes (simple fleshy fruit that usually contains a single seed), 1-1.5cm that occur in bunches  
Succulent outer layer over the hard ribbed stone that has five cells each containing a seed.  
Fruit ripens while tree is leafless  
February to June

<p><i>Ecological notes:</i></p>	<p>Fruit and/ or seed eaten by the Spectacled Flying-fox, Emerald Dove, Rose-crowned and Wompoo Fruit-doves, Pied Imperial, Topknot, Wonga and White-headed Pigeons, Red-tailed Black and Sulphur Cockatoos, Rainbow Lorikeet, Crimson and Eastern Rosellas, Red-capped Parrot, Australian King Parrot, Western Ringneck, Lewin's Honeyeater, Trillers, Figbird, Olive-backed and Yellow Orioles, Pied Currawong, Green and Spotted Catbirds and the Regent, Stain, Spotted and Tooth-billed Bowerbirds.</p> <p>Nectar eaten by the Red Wattlebird.</p> <p>Larval food plant of the White Cedar Moth (<b>NOTE: Contact with larva causes an itching condition of the skin.</b>)</p> 
<p><b>Cultivation:</b></p>	<p>Grows from seed Seed can be stored at low temperature for several years.</p>
<p><b>Distribution:</b></p>	<p>Found across Australia Edges of rainforest along drainage lines, monsoon forests and dry rainforest and more seasonal rainforests Extremely drought tolerant Common in regrowth</p> 
<p><b>OTHER INFORMATION</b></p>	

**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.

White Cedar is declared a weed in the USA and New Zealand.

**Seeds:** Seeds have been used to make jewellery and rosary beads.

## **QUIZ TIME**

- 1. In which two countries is White Cedar declared a weed?**
  - a. USA and Canada
  - b. USA and Australia
  - c. USA and NZ
  - d. USA and Iceland
  
- 2. True or False. The fruit of the White Cedar is poisonous to humans.**
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
- 3. Which one of the following is not a use for White Cedar?**
  - a. sunscreen
  - b. to treat intestinal worms
  - c. fishing technique
  - d. jewelry

## **ANSWERS:**

1. C
2. A
3. A

## **REFERENCES**

CSIRO. (2020). *Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants*.

Melzer, R., & Plumb, J. (2011). *Plants of Capricornia*. Belgamba.

Williams, P., Kirkpatrick, S., Griffith University. Centre for Coastal Management, & Gold Coast (Qld.). Council. (2009). *Coastal Plant Pocket Guide*. Griffith Centre for Coastal Management.

### **Image 1**

Alpsdake. (2012). *Melia azedarach*.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Melia\\_azedarach\\_flower.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Melia_azedarach_flower.JPG)

### **Image 2**

Lim, M. (2020). *Melia azedarach* tree growing in Australia.

[https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Melia\\_azedarach\\_\(White\\_Cedar\)\\_tree\\_in\\_suburban\\_backyard.jpg](https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Melia_azedarach_(White_Cedar)_tree_in_suburban_backyard.jpg)

**Image 3**

Jago, B. (n.d.). *Melia azedarach* flowers.

[https://apps.lucidcentral.org/rainforest/text/entities/melia\\_azedarach.htm?zoom\\_highlight=Melia+azedarach](https://apps.lucidcentral.org/rainforest/text/entities/melia_azedarach.htm?zoom_highlight=Melia+azedarach)

**Image 4**

Anichkova, A. (2014). *Melia azedarach* flowers.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Melia\\_azedarach\\_01434.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Melia_azedarach_01434.jpg)

**Image 5**

The Australasian Virtual Herbarium. (2021). *Melia azedarach*.

[https://avh.ala.org.au/occurrences/search?taxa=Melia+azedarach#tab\\_mapView](https://avh.ala.org.au/occurrences/search?taxa=Melia+azedarach#tab_mapView)