

Chinese Tallow

(*Triadica sebifera*) (syn. *Sapium sebiferum*)

Chinese Tallow, a member of the Euphorbiaceae family, is also known as a Popcorn Tree.



Status in Far North Coast Weeds area

Chinese Tallow is a Class 3 Noxious Weed in the North Coast area and must be fully and continuously suppressed and destroyed.

This weed is invasive and alters nutrient cycles, quickly forming dense monocultures displacing native vegetation.

While the Chinese Tallow appears to favour wetter areas such as swamps, they can grow in drier conditions and have been planted as an ornamental tree in streets and gardens.

Chinese Tallow (*Triadica sebifera*)

Origin

The Chinese Tallow is native to south-eastern Asia, mainly China, and was introduced as an ornamental tree in streetscapes and gardens.

Description

Chinese Tallow is easily recognised by its heart-shaped leaves that turn red in Autumn before falling in Winter. Its fruits split open to reveal white-coated seeds that are sometimes likened to popcorn, hence its other common name: Popcorn Tree.



It is a medium to large tree that can reach 15-20m high. Branches generally begin relatively low on the trunk and are often long and drooping.

The leaves are simple alternate heart-shaped leaves, medium to dark green above, slightly paler underneath, with conspicuous yellowish veins on both surfaces. Leaves are up to 10cm long and 7.5cm wide, with petioles up to 5cm long and tend to look 'droopy'. Two swollen glands are located on the petiole immediately below the leaf blade.



Slender 8-20cm spikes of tiny creamy-white to greenish-yellow flowers are produced at the ends of branches between late spring and early summer, usually from around November to February.

Fruit is produced in late summer to autumn, usually between March and May, and are three-lobed green capsules about 1-2cm long by about 2cm wide, maturing to brown-black before opening into three valves.

Valves fall away leaving the white-coated seeds, up to three per fruit, hanging on the tree usually for several weeks.

The similar looking native, Bleeding Heart (*Homalanthus populifolius*) is not deciduous and only the older leaves turn red before falling. It will often have reddish upper stems and the fruit is a two-lobed capsule

Distribution

Infestations of Chinese Tallow can be found throughout the North Coast of NSW, with heavier infestations in the Casino area, and is also present in other areas of NSW, Victoria and Queensland.

Invasive traits

Chinese Tallow produces up to 100,000 seeds per tree per year with long seed dormancy. Shade, sun, drought and flood tolerant it can quickly establish thickets and displace other vegetation and restrict access to waterways and wetlands.

Dispersal method

Chinese Tallow is spread by humans through plantings, by birds, and by water carrying the floating seeds.

Control methods

Refer to the **Noxious and environmental weeds control handbook (5th edition; 2011)** available at the Industry & Investment website:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/pests-weeds/weeds/publications/noxious-enviro-weed-control>

More information:

- www.northcoastweeds.org.au
- www.weeds.org.au
- www.clarence.nsw.gov.au
- www.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au
- www.bellingen.nsw.gov.au
- www.nambucca.nsw.gov.au
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