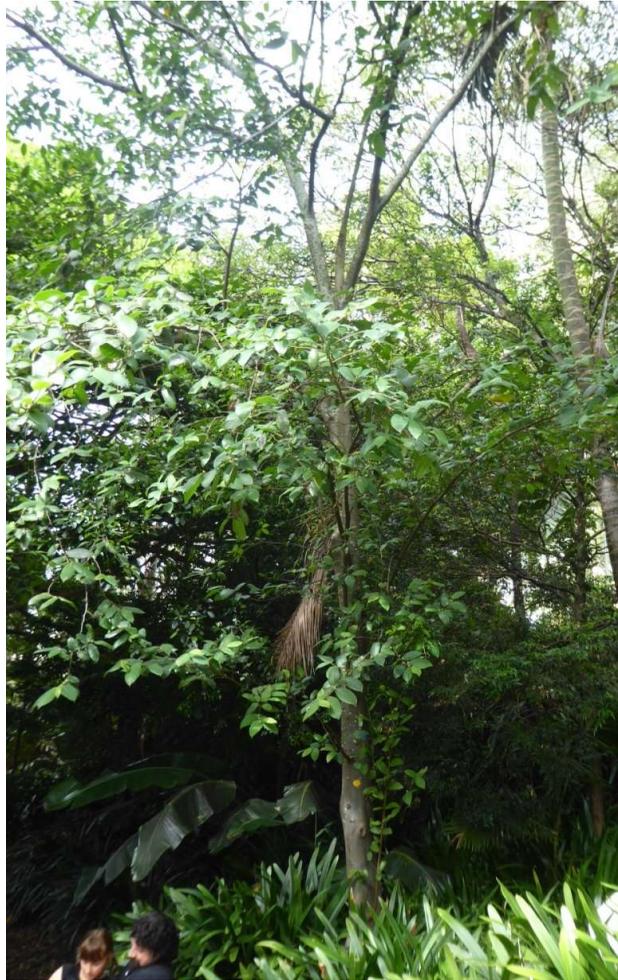




Sandpaper Fig

ID # 99



Interesting facts

The Sandpaper Fig was first described by the Italian Marquese di Spigno in 1818 and named *coronata* which from the Latin means "crowned" and refers to a ring of bristles around the apex of the fruit



Fruits occur in the axils of tree stems and on the trunk (a growth habit known as 'cauliflory'). This is a habit shared with other species including jackfruits and papayas.



The fruit is said to be the best tasting Australian fig, eaten raw (after removing the hairy skin), dried or cooked in cakes, pies, jellies, jams and sauces.



Family: *Moraceae*

Genus *Ficus*

Botanic name: *Ficus coronata*

Also known as: Sandpaper Fig or Creek Sandpaper Fig

Origin: It is a native to Australia and found in coastal and tableland areas from south-east Queensland, through New South Wales to occasional occurrences in Victoria.

Habitat: Occurs in sub-tropical rainforests and gallery forests along creek, river and wetland banks. It is frost sensitive, grows best in plenty of light, and prefers light to medium, well-drained soils in an open sunny position.

Description: A densely branching shrub or small tree, usually growing to 6-12 metres high, with a spread of 3-6 metres diameter.

Its light brown bark is rough (scabrous). The leaves are ovate to oblong in shape with a pointed tip.

Leaves occur on a short (1 cm) stem, and are 5-15 cm long and 2-8 cm wide.

The most distinguishing feature of the leaves is their scabrid hairy upper surface, the texture resembling sandpaper, with softer white or brown hairs on the under-surface.

Propagation and cultivation: Like all figs, the flowers occur on the inside of fruiting bodies (the "fig"). This inverted inflorescence is called a syconium.

The fruits, which grow to approximately 2 cm in diameter, are initially green, changing to dark purple-black as they ripen (usually between January and June).

Each fig contains many small unisexual flowers embedded along the fig wall, the males nearer the opening and the females deeper inside the fruit.

Propagation is possible from planting of fresh seeds and from cuttings taken from the growing tip of a live plant and is adaptable to bonsai cultivation.

Indigenous Use: Aboriginal people traditionally use the leaves to smooth and polish weaponry or turtle shells, the bark to make string, and the fruit in various bush tucker. Parts of the tree were also used to treat wounds.



Sources:

Australian National Botanic Gardens Fact Sheet - Australian Tropical Rainforest Plants: *Ficus coronata*; www.canbr.gov.au/cpbr/cdkeys/RFK7/key/RFK7/media/html/entities/Ficus_coronata.htm; Australian National Herbarium Growing Native Plants: *Ficus coronata* <https://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/interns-2015/ficus-coronata.html>; Bodkin, Frances (1992) Encyclopaedia Botanica: The Essential Reference Guide to Native and Exotic Plants in Australia; Field Guide to the Native Plants of Sydney. 3rd edition; PlantNet: NSW Flora Online