



Cheese Tree

ID # 37



A versatile food source



The fruit from the Cheese Tree is very popular but it's only suitable for birds like the top-knot pigeon, figbird and parrot. The new leafy growth is eaten by the rainbow lorikeet. It also serves as food for the larvae of the Common Oak Blue and Shining Pencil Blue butterflies.

Uses:

The dried fruits are found in potpourri and sold as "putka pods".



Interesting Fact:

The name "cheese tree" is said to come from its fruit's resemblance to small cheese wheels but they really more closely resemble miniature Queensland Blue pumpkins.

Family: *Phyllanthaceae*

Genus: *Glochidion*

Botanic name: *Glochidion ferdinandi*

Glochidion from Greek *glochis* or *glochis* projecting point, barb of an arrow, referring to the toothed style of some species; *Ferdinandi* honours the Victorian State Botanist Ferdinand von Mueller (1825–1896)

Also known as: Cheese Tree, Water Gum, Pencil Cedar, Buttonwood, Rain Tree, Jow-war

Origin: They grow naturally across eastern Australia from south-eastern New South Wales northwards to northern and inland Queensland.

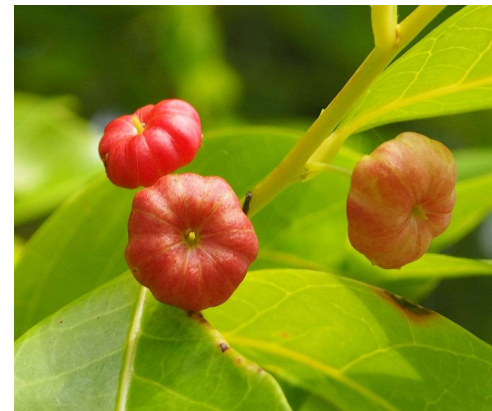
Habitat: The Cheese Tree grows in both clay and sandy soils, and is found on the margins of rainforest and along scrubby watercourses. It is a long-lived species which may live for 60 years or more.

Description: The Cheese Tree grows as a woody shrub or small tree to 8m, although occasionally reaching 30m with flaky brownish-grey bark.



It has simple glossy alternate-arranged elliptical to oblong-elliptical leaves 3-10cm in length and 1.5-4cm wide; the species may be partly deciduous in winter.

The small roundish, ribbed fruit are green at first before turning shades of white and pink. Divided into segments radially, they eventually split open to reveal bright red 0.5 cm seeds.



Flowers cluster from the leaf axils with both single female and male flowers, which are found in groups of three. Both sexes are green-yellow, with the male flower 0.7cm and the female 0.5cm in diameter. Flowering may occur at any time of year.



Propagation and cultivation: Can be propagated from either seeds or cuttings which strike easily. The Cheese Tree is dependent on leaf-flower moths (*Epicephala spp.*) for its pollination.

Sources:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glochidion_ferdinandi
http://www.brisrain.org.au/
Save our waterways Inc.
plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au