

## CELASTRACEAE

Glabrous trees or shrubs. Stipules minute. Leaves simple, alternate or opposite. Inflorescence cymose or racemose, bracteate. Flowers actinomorphic, bisexual or unisexual. Perianth 3-5-merous. Petals imbricate. Stamens 2-5, filaments inserted on or beneath a usually conspicuous disc. Ovary superior or half inferior, usually partly immersed in disc, 1-10-locular with 1-many ovules per locule; stigma (in DR) sessile. Fruit a capsule or a drupe. Seeds often arillate.

A pantropical family of about 50 genera and 800 species with 14 genera and 34 species in Australia. Five genera and 6 species in the NT with 3 genera in the DR. [Jessup, 1984a]

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|---|----------|
| 1. Leaves opposite; fruit indehiscent .....                       | Cassine  |
| 1. Leaves alternate; fruit dehiscent .....                        | 2        |
| 2. Fruit 4-8 mm long, coriaceous; aril of seed basal, white ..... | Maytenus |
| 2. Fruit 20-40 mm long, woody; aril enveloping seed, red .....    | Denhamia |

### CASSINE L.

About 80 species, pantropical; 2 species in Australia with 1 in the NT.

#### C. melanocarpa (FMuell.) Kuntze

*Elaeodendron melanocarpum* FMuell.

Diocious evergreen shrub or small tree to 6 m. Bark smooth, grey. Stipules caducous. Leaves opposite; petioles 7-11 mm long; blades obovate to elliptic, 50-130 mm long, 22-90 mm wide, L/B 1.6-2.5, coriaceous, dentate. Inflorescence a short axillary cyme. Petals 3(4), ovate, 1.5-2 mm long. Disc swollen, fleshy. Male flowers: calyx irregularly lobed; stamens 3, inserted on disc

margin. Female flowers: sepals 3-4, often with short lobes between; staminodes 3(4); ovary conical, 3-locular; stigma entire. Fruit a drupe, black, hard, shiny, globular, 15-20 mm diam. Seeds 1-3. Flowering: Aug - Mar; fruiting: most months. Fig. 68

Coastal or subcoastal regions of northern Australia to southern Qld. Rare in the DR where known from Tipperary and the headwaters of the Adelaide R. Commonly in coastal vine thickets.

### DENHAMIA Meissner

An Australian endemic genus of c. 7 species; 1 species in the NT.

#### D. obscura (A.Rich.) Meissner ex Walp.

Evergreen small tree to 9 m; trunk fluted. Bark smooth, pale grey, becoming dark and rough. Leaves alternate; petioles 5-10 mm long; blades discolorous, lower surface with pale waxy cuticle, elliptic or oblanceolate, 50-120 mm long, 9-38 mm wide, L/B 2.7-5.4, entire; juvenile leaves coarsely dentate and holly-like. Inflorescence cymose, paniculate, to 110 mm long. Flowers bisexual, greenish. Sepals 5, c. 1.3 mm long. Petals 5, 2-3.5 mm long. Stamens 5, inserted on margin of annular disc. Ovary partly

immersed in disc, imperfectly (2)3-locular, 6(7) ovules per locule; stigmas 3. Fruit a capsule, pale greenish yellow, ovoid or globular, 25-40 mm long, woody. Seeds 5-6 mm long, enveloped in red aril. Flowering: June - Sept; fruiting: May - Dec. Fig. 68

Occurs from the Kimberley, disjunctly to Arnhem Land. Common in the DR in Eucalypt savanna on a variety of well drained soils. The inner bark of the roots is bright yellow to orange and is readily flammable.

**MAYTENUS** Molina

About 200 species, pantropical and subtropical; 7 species in Australia with 2 species in the NT and 1 recorded in the DR.

**M. ferdinandi** Jessup

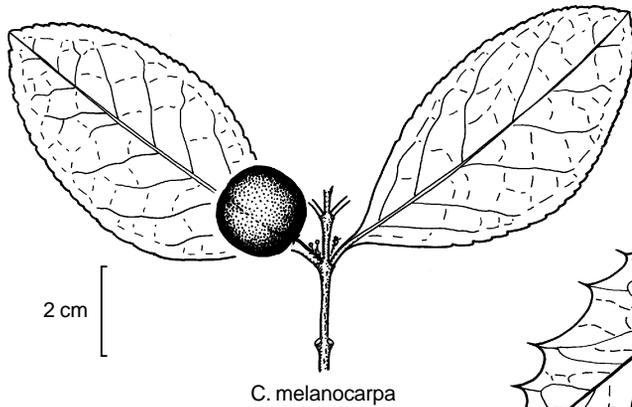
Deciduous tree to 8 m. Bark smooth, grey. Leaves alternate; petioles 9-13 mm long; blades slightly discoloured, elliptic, lanceolate, obovate, 40-100 mm long, 20-50 mm wide, L/B 1.8-3, entire. Inflorescences borne on old wood, racemose; bracts and bracteoles erose. Flowers bisexual, white. Sepals 5, erose. Petals 5, 6-7 mm long. Stamens 5, inserted

on margin of flattened notched disc. Ovary 2-3-locular, ovules 2 per locule; stigma 2-3-lobed. Fruit a capsule, ellipsoid, 4-8 mm long, 2-3-valved. Seeds 1-3, verrucose, red-brown; aril white, basal, fleshy. Flowering: Nov - Jan; fruiting: Dec - Mar. Fig. 68

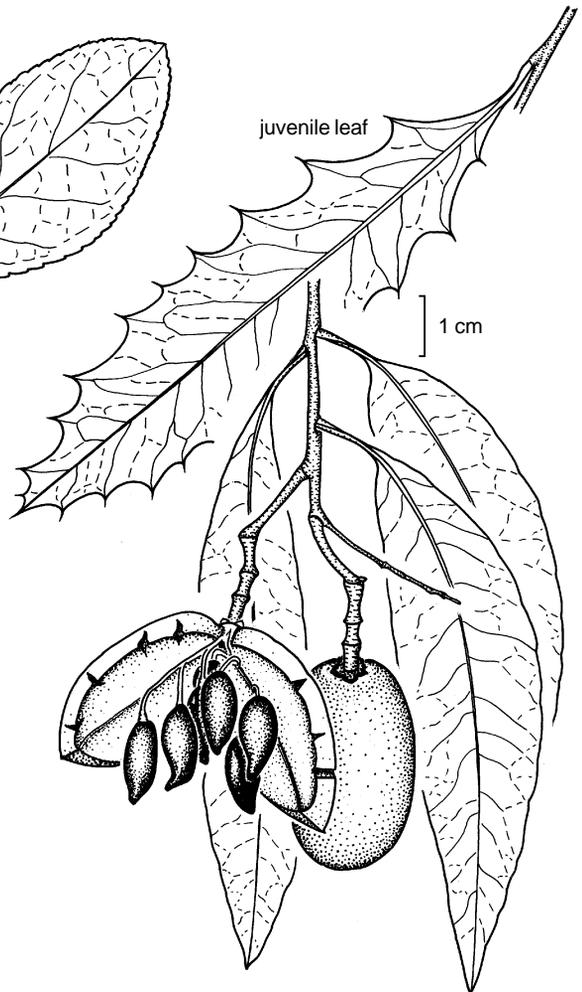
Occurs from the Kimberley to western Arnhem Land. Rare in the DR where known from Acacia Hills and Virginia. Associated with sandstone in Eucalypt savanna or edges of monsoon forest.

**Cassine**

**Denhamia**

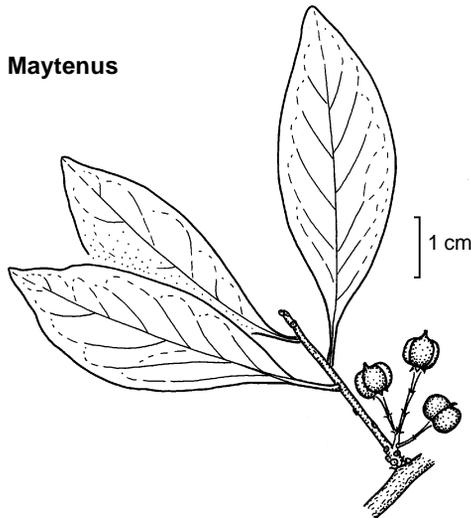


*C. melanocarpa*



*D. obscura*

**Maytenus**



*M. ferdinandi*