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# MANGROVES OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY, AUSTRALIA:

*IDENTIFICATION and TRADITIONAL USE*

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**EXTRACT: *Dalbergia* (pp. 83–85)**

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DARWIN 2006

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***Dalbergia*****FABACEAE**

**DERIVATION:** In honour of the brothers Nils and Carl Dalberg, both botanically orientated, the latter sending specimens to Linnaeus during the 18th century.

A genus of about 100 tropical species, two species occur in Australia, one in tidal areas of the NT.

***Dalbergia candenatensis* (Dennst.) Prain*****Dalbergia***

**DERIVATION:** The name 'candenatensis' means coming from Candenat, possibly in reference to the area where this species was first collected.

**DESCRIPTION:** Climber to 8 m long, stems twining, to 5 cm diameter; bark dark grey, lenticellate. Leaves alternate, pinnate with a terminal leaflet, 4–13 cm long; leaflets 5–8, petiole 1–2 mm long, lamina 1.5–3.0 x 2.0–4.1 cm, obovate or elliptic, apex rounded or emarginate, base cuneate, upper surface dark green, lower surface glaucous with distinct reticulate venation. Racemes axillary, branched, 5–50 mm long, rachis shortly pubescent. Flowers bisexual, zygomorphic. Calyx 5-lobed, laterals reduced, upper lobes joined. Corolla small, white. Ovary superior, ovules few; style curved; stigma small. Stamens 10, upper 1 free, others fused; anthers dorsifixed. Pods sickle-shaped, indehiscent, 2–3.5 x 1.3–1.5 cm, stipitate, calyx persistent. Seeds 1–2, kidney-shaped, 18–23 mm long, reticulately veined, glabrous.

**HABITAT:** *Dalbergia candenatensis* has been found growing in silt and sand substrates, at the landward edge of mangal communities. It appears intolerant of frequent saltwater inundation, preferring either areas with perennially high fresh water input or areas at the upper limits of normal tidal influence. Associates include *Nypa fruticans*, *Rhizophora apiculata*, *Bruguiera gymnorhiza* and *Acrostichum speciosum*.

**DISTRIBUTION:** *Dalbergia candenatensis* has a sporadic distribution on the northern coast of the NT, though it is fairly common in some areas near Darwin. *Dalbergia candenatensis* also occurs in Queensland; extra-Australian records include India, China and throughout south east Asia including the Indonesian archipelago.

**DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:** Climber, with stems to 5 cm diameter; compound leaves with 5–8 unequally pinnate, rounded, alternate leaflets; flowers white, small; fruit sickle-shaped to 35 mm long.

**NOTES:** Many woody species of the genus *Dalbergia* are utilised for their timber, e.g. *D. sissoo* (India), *D. melanoxylon* (Indian Ebony, Africa) and *D. nigra* (Brazil).

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The 1 or 2-seeded indehiscent fruit is adapted to water and wind dispersal. Guppy (1906) related the buoyancy of the fruit to the unoccupied space between the fruit wall and seed, buoyancy persists for a few weeks to several months. In contrast van der Pijl (1969) considered the fruit morphology combined with climbing habit 'on the road' to wind dispersal. Buds occur in October, while fruits are present in May.

Reference: Verdcourt 1979.

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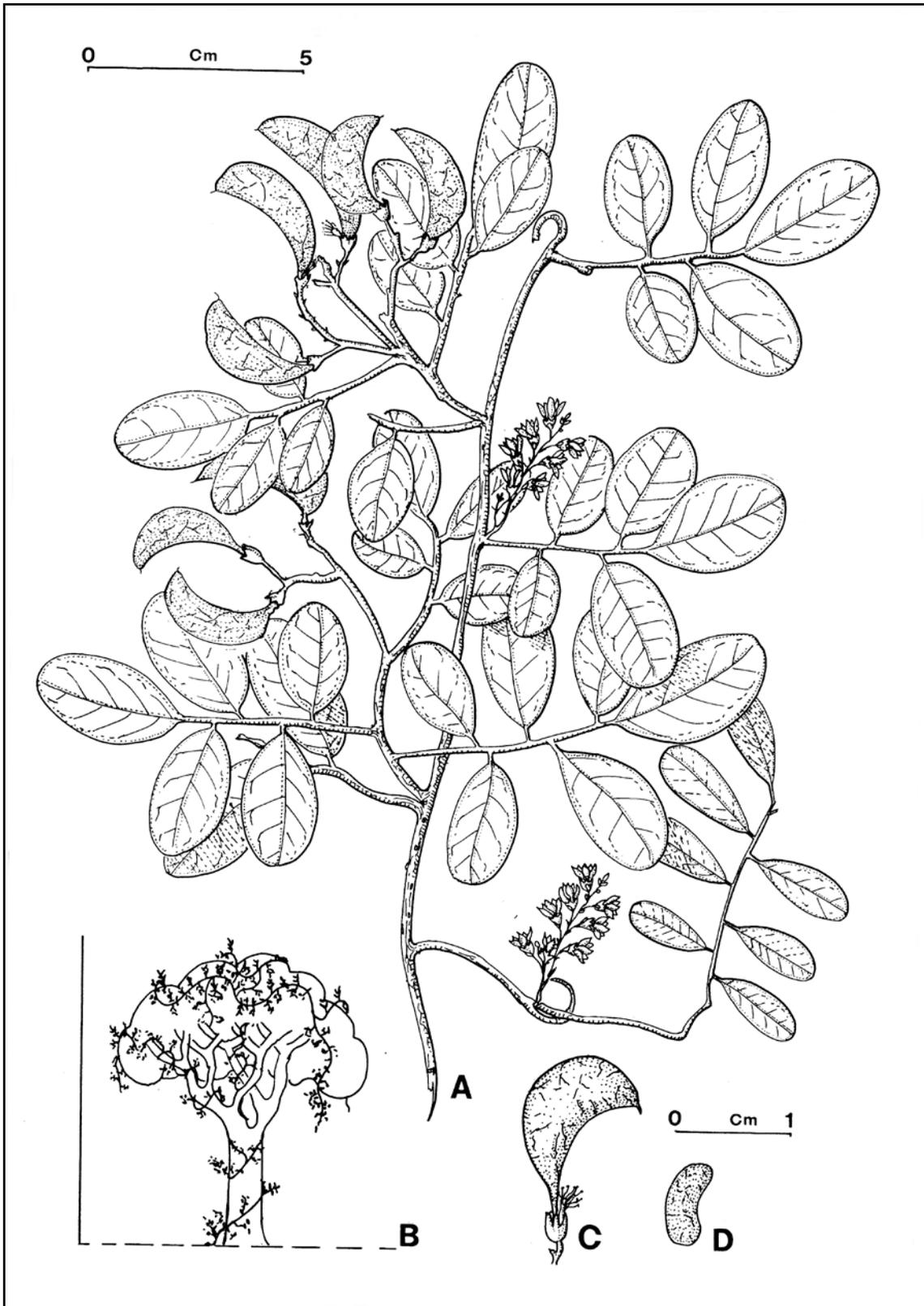


Figure 23. *Dalbergia candenatensis*. A, flowering and fruiting branch; B, habit; C, fruit; D, seed (A, L. Webb and J. Tracey 6117, BRI; C–D, C. White s.n., BRI 344037).