

AUSTRALIAN BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES STUDY



FLOODPLAIN FLORA

A flora of the coastal floodplains
of the Northern Territory, Australia

I. D. Cowie, P. S. Short & M. Osterkamp Madsen

Parks & Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory



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Extract: Vitaceae

VITACEAE

Climbing woody *vines*, frequently with leaf-opposed tendrils, rarely succulent small trees or erect herbs, mostly unarmed. *Leaves* alternate, simple and often palmately lobed or veined or less often palmately or pinnately compound; stipules commonly deciduous. *Inflorescences* leaf-opposed, terminal or rarely axillary, more or less cymose or sometimes paniculate. *Flowers* small, bisexual or unisexual, actinomorphic, hypogynous, (3) 4- or 5 (7)-merous. *Calyx* often indistinctly toothed or lobed. *Petals* valvate, free or connate, rarely calyptrate. *Stamens* distinct, opposite petals; filaments slender; anthers introrse, mostly tetrasporangiate, dithecal. *Nectary-disc* intrastaminal, commonly annular or cupulate. *Gynoecium* of 2 carpels united to form a compound ovary of up to 2 locules; ovary superior, frequently partly sunken in disc; ovules 2 per locule; style simple; stigma discoid or capitate, rarely quadrifid or sessile. *Fruit* a 1- or 2-locular berry, somewhat dry; locules usually 2-seeded.

A family of about 11 genera and 700 species, occurring mainly in the tropics and subtropics. In Australia 6 genera (1 introduced) and *c.* 30 species. In NT three genera and seven species.

CAYRATIA Juss.

Vines, climbing or scrambling, evergreen or deciduous, sometimes tuberous. *Tendrils* leaf-opposed, often branched. *Leaves* alternate, compound, 3–5-foliolate; margins usually serrate. *Stipules* caducous. *Inflorescence* axillary to leaf-opposed, a corymbose cyme. *Flowers* bisexual, 4-merous. *Calyx* cup-shaped; margins sometimes spreading. *Corolla* lobes free, reflexed after anthesis. *Stamens* inserted on receptacle at base of disc, opposite petals; anthers introrse, dorsifixed, opening by longitudinal slits. *Disc* adnate to ovary and surrounding it, 4-lobed. *Ovary* 2-locular; locules 2-ovulate; ovules basally attached. *Style* conical; stigma minute. *Fruit* a fleshy berry. *Seeds* 4, triangular to ovoid.

A genus of over 60 species occurring in the tropics and subtropics of the Old World and Pacific islands. One species occurs on floodplains in the Top End.

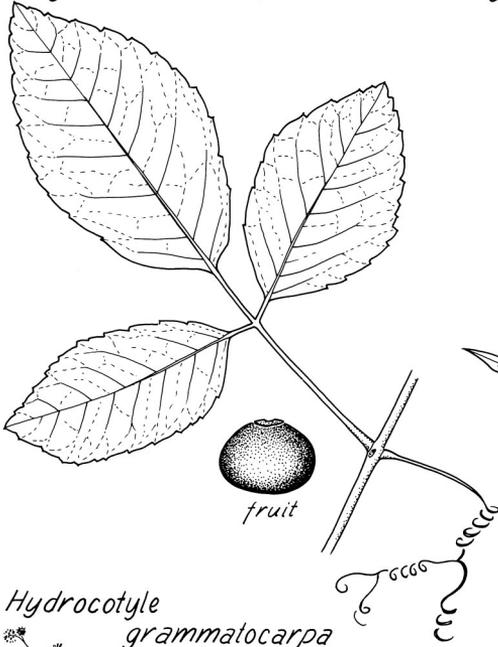
Taxonomic reference: Jackes (1987).

C. maritima Jackes

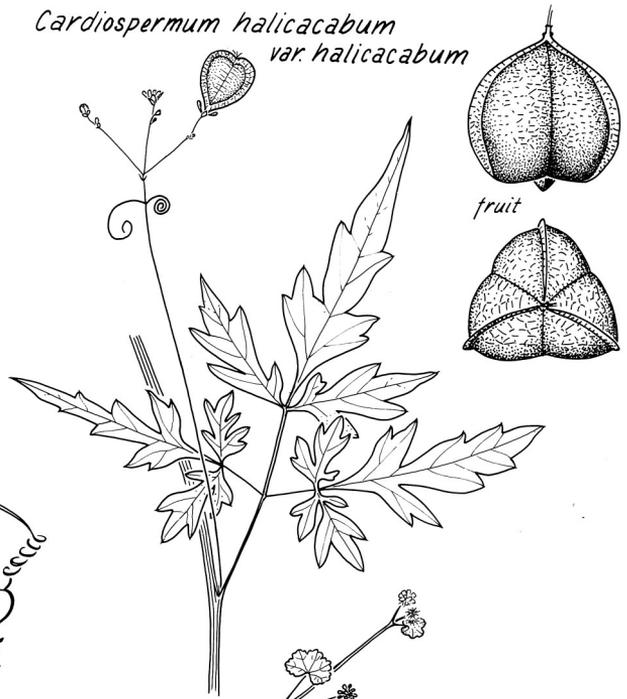
Scrambling *vines*, more or less evergreen, largely glabrous. *Tendrils* 3-fid. *Stipules* triangular, 1.5–2 mm long. *Leaves* pinnately trifoliolate; rachis to basal leaflets 2–7 cm long; leaflets ovate to rhomboidal, sometimes lobed, with hooked hairs on veins below, otherwise glabrous; margins serrate; apex acuminate; terminal leaflet on petiolule 1–4 cm long, with blade 3–7.5 cm long, 2.2–4 cm wide; lateral leaflets on petiolule 2–12 mm long, with blade oblique, 2.5–5.1 cm long, 1.9–3.3 cm wide. *Inflorescences* axillary, cymose, corymbiform, 3–5-branched, to 10 cm long; peduncle to 8 cm long. *Corolla* pale green to white or yellowish; petals *c.* 2 mm long, 2 mm wide. *Berry* black, depressed-globular, 6–12 mm high, 12–16 mm wide. *Flowering*: Sept.–Mar. *Fruiting*: Nov.–July. Fig. 23 (Wightman 4668).

Vietnam to N Australia (NT, Qld). Commonly in shallower parts of *Melaleuca* swamps, also along rivers, around billabongs and in coastal vine thickets. This species is closely related to *C. trifolia* (L.) Domin which has 4- or 5-fid tendrils, with the branches ending in adhesive discs and has hooked hairs widespread on the leaf undersurface. It sometimes occurs on floodplain margins. Specimens with the 3-fid tendrils of *C. maritima* and the hairy leaves of *C. trifolia* are quite common around some floodplains.

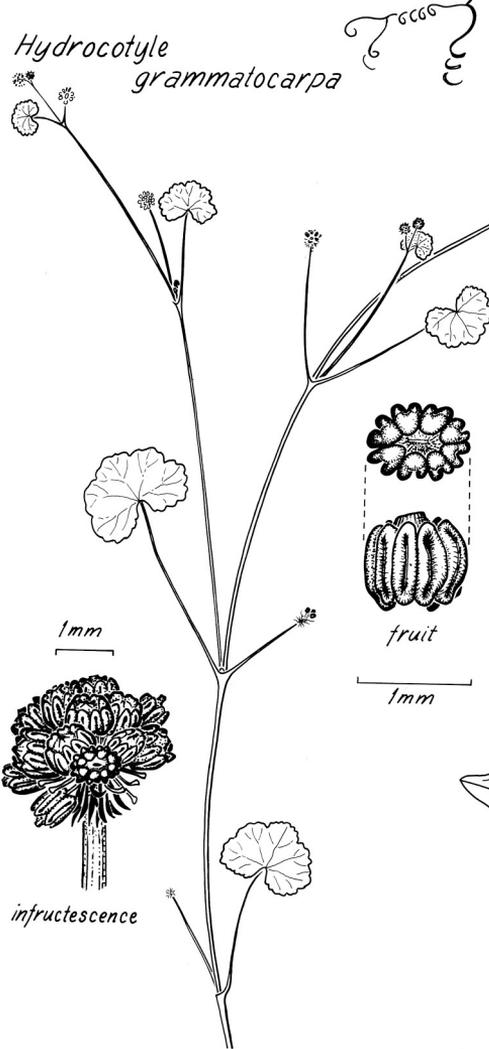
Cayratia maritima



Cardiospermum halicacabum
var. *halicacabum*



Hydrocotyle
grammatocarpa



all illustrations
unless otherwise indicated } 1cm

Physalis minima



FIGURE 23