

# Flora of the Darwin Region

## VOLUME 1

P.S. Short & I.D. Cowie (eds)



BATACEAE

G.M. Wightman & P.S. Short

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Territory**

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## BATACEAE

G.M. Wightman & P.S. Short

Monoecious or dioecious (not Australia), maritime *shrubs*, glabrous; stems commonly 4-angled and with a vascular bundle on each angle. *Leaves* opposite, simple, entire, fleshy; stipules minute, caducous. *Flowers* small, unisexual, axillary or terminal, in monoecious *B. argillicola* solitary on short, leafy shoots but with male and female flowers on the same shoot, in dioecious *B. maritima* (not Australia) congested in axillary inflorescences. *Male flowers* subtended by bracts and a pair of fused, opposite bracteoles; stamens 4, alternating with 4 staminodes (or tepals depending on interpretation); anthers exerted, tetrasporangiate and dithecal, opening by longitudinal slits; gynoecium not or barely developed. *Female flowers* consisting of a naked, bicarpellate, 4-locular gynoecium, each locule with a single, erect, anatropous ovule; stigmas 2, papillate. *Fruit* drupaceous, fleshy or leathery and adapted to floating in salt water. *Seeds* oblong-lanceolate; embryo straight or almost so; endosperm absent.

A monogeneric family with just two species. Found in coastal regions of tropical and subtropical America, Galapagos and Hawaiian islands, and coastal regions of northern Australia and New Guinea.

Taxonomic references: Cronquist (1981); Ross (1982); Bayer & Appel (2003); Wightman (2006).

### BATIS P. Browne

#### **B. argillicola** P. Royen

Monoecious, often rounded *shrubs* *c.* 30–70 cm tall; base woody, bark fibrous, grey. *Leaves* obovoid, 3–15 mm long, 1–2.5 mm wide, trigonous or rounded in cross section, apically rounded. *Male flowers* sessile, the solitary flowers subtended by 2 concave bracts, the bracts *c.* 4 mm long, *c.* 2 mm wide and with membranous margins; stamens with linear-terete filaments 2–2.5 mm long and elliptic anthers *c.* 1 mm long; staminodes 1.5–2.5 mm long, 0.5–1 mm wide. *Female flowers* usually solitary but apically may be associated with an additional male and female flower, sessile. *Drupe* 8–18.5 mm long, 4–9 mm diam., yellow. *Seeds* oblong-lanceolate, 5–6 mm long, 1.1–1.2 mm wide. *Flowering*: June–Oct. *Fruiting*: Dec.–Feb.

Fig. 1 (*Andrens 1; Leach 2959*); Pl. 1 (unvouchered); Pl. 2 (*Lewis 1077*).

New Guinea and northern Australia (W.A., N.T., Qld). Occurs sporadically around the N.T. coast, growing behind mangroves, along tidal creeks, and on salt pans; commonly in saline mud, rarely sand. Localities in the N.T. include Meckitt Creek (Darwin), Milikapiti (Melville Island) and Ramingining. Associated species include *Avicennia marina*, *Lumnitzera racemosa*, *Tecticornia indica*, *T. australasica* and *Sporobolus virginicus*.

A lack of suitable flowering specimens has meant that this description is partly based on Ross (1982). He noted that New Guinea specimens differ from Australian material in having, for example, stalked not sessile male flowers, and winged instead of terete staminal filaments.

#### *Batis argillicola*

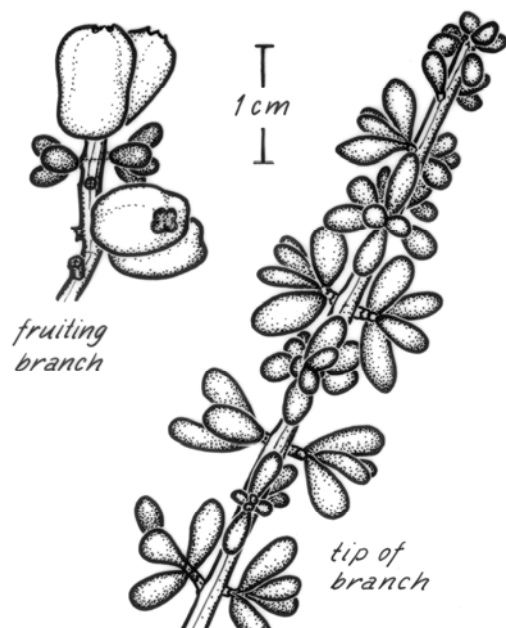


Fig. 1

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Pl. 1 *Batis argillicola* (Photo: G.M. Wightman)



Pl. 2 *Batis argillicola* (Photo: D.L. Lewis)