

Brachychiton populneus

(Kurrajong)



Notes

An under utilised Australian native species that has high drought tolerance coupled with an attractive broad-form that provides good shade coverage.

The Kurrajong definitely has a role to play in contemporary urban landscapes.



SPECIES DESCRIPTION SHEET

Origin	Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Northern Territory
Habit:	Modest size evergreen, broad domed tree of 12 to 15m in height by 12 to 15 m in crown diameter generally with a stout trunk.
Description:	<p>Bark is green and smooth on young trees and smaller branches in upper crown, becoming dark, compacted and coarsely fissured on stout trunk to larger branches of maturing specimens.</p> <p>Foliage discolourous, glossy green above and paler green below. Mostly entire but sometimes with up to 3 small pointed lobes depending on subspecies. Subspecies <i>populneus</i> has mostly entire leaves reminiscent of Poplar (<i>Populus</i> genus) and subspecies <i>trilobus</i> has 3, sometimes 5, narrow lobes and more northerly and inland distribution.</p> <p>Flowers, appearing in October to December, are cream to pale green bell shaped flowers with pale pink to purple flecks in the throat of the bell.</p> <p>Fruit are a leathery boat shaped follicle with hairs on the seeds held within.</p>
Tolerances:	<p>Drought tolerant, prefers free draining soils.</p> <p>Low tolerance of waterlogged sites and excessive root disturbance. Can be transplanted successfully as a smaller tree (3-4m) but presence of residual tap root can be problematic.</p>
Root space:	Based on a mature size specimen of Kurrajong (12m crown spread) would require approximately 113m ² area or 68m ³ root volume (crown projection method).
Availability:	Readily available and as advanced specimens of 2-4m stock with generally successful establishment in free draining soils and sunny position. Slow to moderate growth rate.
Uses & management:	<p>The tree has been observed to be thriving in the recent drought conditions throughout south-eastern Australia even in comparison to other species recognised as drought tolerant such as many eucalypt species and exotic conifers and evergreens.</p> <p>It is a terrific dense, broad domed tree offering cool shade suitable for use in average to larger gardens.</p> <p>An ideal street tree and suitable for pruning below electrical services.</p> <p>Wood properties are low density and fibrous and shows a relatively poor ability to compartmentalise decay.</p> <p>Kurrajong has a generally reliable structure so therefore has a low susceptibility to decay unless wounded by external causes. Avoid trees with included bark forks although even these are rarely seen to have failed.</p> <p>Foliage can be used as a supplementary source of fodder in conjunction with other types.</p> <p>Has the potential to self-propagate on disturbed and neglected sites but otherwise has a relatively low weed potential.</p>

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Ref:

Florabank fact sheet

http://www.florabank.org.au/lucid/key/species%20navigator/media/html/Brachychiton_populneus.htm

Australian Government. Australian National Botanic Gardens. Growing Native plants.

<http://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/interns-2002/brachychiton-populneus.html>

www.treelogic.com.au