

Anopterus glandulosus



Hans & Annie Wapstra

FAMILY: Escalloniaceae

BOTANICAL NAME: *Anopterus glandulosus*

COMMON NAME: tasmanian laurel

CONSERVATION SIGNIFICANCE:
Endemic

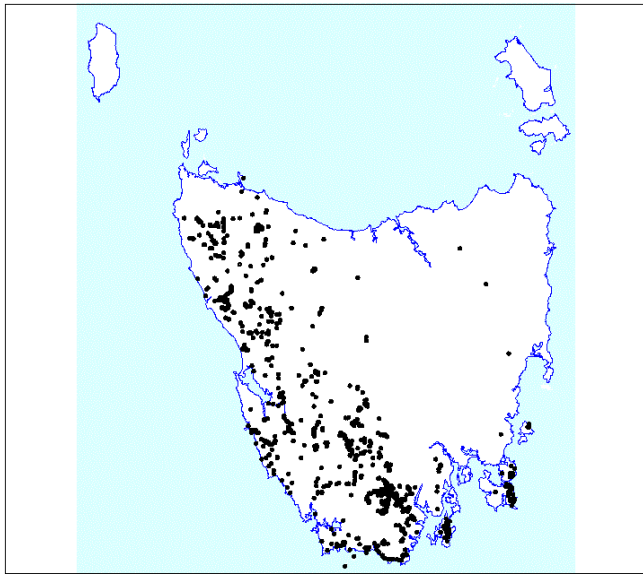
Description

Tasmanian laurel is a handsome evergreen shrub usually 2 to 4 m high, though it can form a tree of up to 10 m. It is easily recognised by its large (7–17 cm long and 2–4 cm broad), dark green, thick, glossy leaves, clustered mainly at the ends of its branches. The leaf margins have blunt teeth and glands. The flowers are cup-shaped, white (or flushed pink) and 2 cm across, borne on slender pedicels (stalks) and arranged in terminal sprays that are as long as the leaves. The fruit is a capsule, opening in two valves, which diverge at the top and curl back to expose two very fine, elongated, winged seeds.

Confusing species

Cenarrhenes nitida (native plum) has a similar habit and foliage. When not in flower, they can be differentiated by the tendency of *A. glandulosus* to have the leaves clustered at the ends of branches. Also *C. nitida* has a very distinctive, not very pleasant (foetid) smell when the leaves are crushed.

Distribution and Habitat



Distribution of *Anopterus glandulosus* in Tasmania 2004 data.

Tasmanian laurel occurs in the south and west of the State in rainforest and wet eucalypt forest below 1200 m.

Ecology

Tasmanian laurel is a slow-growing understorey shrub (though at times it can form a canopy tree), usually under a canopy of myrtle beech (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*). In such shaded positions the plant becomes straggly and the branches tend to layer, forming thickets.

The showy and highly-scented flowers produce copious nectar and attract both nectar- and insect-eating birds such as honey-eaters. Tasmanian laurel flowers during spring, typically in October, and often again in the autumn. The seed ripens usually between November and December.

It is a hardy and adaptable species that is both frost and snow-tolerant. It prefers cool, moist, semi-shaded conditions and well-drained soils, ranging from loams to sandy soil types that are rich in organic matter.

As a rainforest species, tasmanian laurel is adapted for continuous regeneration so it copes well with disturbance. It usually responds to damage with vigorous regrowth, often forming thickets of coppiced growth where mechanical damage has occurred and gaps are created within the forest canopy by, for example, a large tree falling

This species is susceptible to *Phytophthora cinnamomi* and intolerant to phosphorus.

Potential for Cultivation

Tasmanian laurel is a very attractive shrub with considerable horticultural potential. It is easily propagated from fresh seed and/or from cuttings taken during March–April. Seeds will germinate within 4–5 months. Cuttings can be slow to strike.

Once propagated, tasmanian laurel is generally easy to grow in cultivation in partially protected situations such as against a wall or a fence or in a container. It can coexist with exotic garden species, blending in well.

It requires ample water during summer and will also respond to the application of organic (not phosphate-based) fertilisers or manures and mulches on the soil surface.

Tasmanian laurel copes well with being pruned annually, its attractive and hardy foliage making it a good species to harvest for floriculture.

Information Sources

Australian National Botanical Gardens (2003). <http://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/interns-2003/anopterus-glandulosus.html>

Cameron, M. (ed.) (1981) *Guide to Flowers and Plants of Tasmania*. Launceston Field Naturalists Club and Reed Books, Sydney, NSW.

Curtis, W.M. & Morris, D.L. (1993) *The Student's Flora of Tasmania*. Part 1. (2nd ed.). St. David's Park Publishing.

Floyd, A.G. (1989) *Rainforest Trees of Mainland South-eastern Australia*. Inkata Press, Sydney.

Hutchinson, J. (1969) *Evolution and Phylogeny of Flowering Plants*. Academic Press, London, UK.

Hutchinson, J. (1973) *The Families of Flowering Plants*. (3rd ed.). Clarendon Press, Oxford, UK.

Morley, B.D. & Toelken, H.R. (eds) (1983) *Flowering Plants of Australia*. Rigby, Adelaide.

Understorey Network. Tasmanian Native Species Database. www.understorey-network.org.au