

Allocasuarina torulosa - Forest Oak

Family:

Casuarinaceae

Distribution:

Coastal New South Wales mainly but may extend inland for over 200km. Found in forests preferring higher fertility soils than *A. littoralis*. In HSC; Communities RF1 (5.9 ha), N (7.9 ha), TI (295 ha), Q1 (271.1 ha), Q2 (6.6 ha), R (281.1 ha) & S (62.3 ha).

Common Name:

Forest Oak. (prev. known as *Casuarina stricta* pre 1980's)

Derivation of Name:

Allocasuarina; from Greek allos, different (to) casuarina, Malay word for Kasuari, referring to the similarity of the plant's foliage to Cassowary feathers. ***torulosa***; Latin, torulus, like protuberance, -osus, abounding in, referring to the wart-like occurrences on the cone segments.

Conservation Status:

Inadequately conserved in HSC; mainly located in National Parks estate where it is common on the lower slopes of the Hawkesbury River and Berowra Creek (Comm. Q1 & Comm. R both regionally significant communities). Uncommon to rare on council managed land.

Description:

Tree to 15 m+ high; bark persistent, rough, corky, grey/dark brown. Foliage is "conifer" like & pendulous, the photosynthetic branchlets have a tiny reduced whorled teeth leaves 4 or 5 per segment. Flowering occurs in autumn through winter, male trees turn gold when laden with pollen. Female trees only bear the "cone" like fruit. The fruit are globular and round woody capsules measuring 20 to 40mm in length. Exceptional tall specimens (25m) occur on the Jerusalem Bay track, Cowan, within Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park and occasionally nearby other estuarine creeks.

Longevity:

Up to 100 years, possibly longer. Not killed by wildfire.

Horticultural Merit and uses:

Worthwhile small decorative tree with little pest and disease afflictions. Very drought hardy once established. Can be pruned heavily if required. Self mulching. Long lived. Frost hardy. Thick canopy up to 8m high in cultivation; useful street tree. May turn a dark purple hue in cooler months which adds to aesthetic appeal. Timber was split historically in colonial days to use as roofing shingles.

Fauna Value:

Important feed tree for the threatened Glossy Black Cockatoo which feeds on seeds. Foliage is gleaned for insects by small insectivorous birds.









