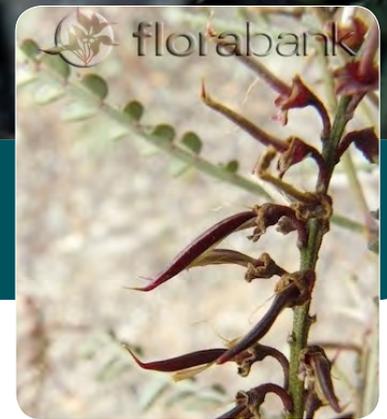


(a) photo: M. Fagg



Indigofera adesmiifolia

Indigofera adesmiifolia (syn. *I. australis* var. *signata* [5]) is a small shrub to 1.5 m high [4]. The common name is: Tick Indigo [4].

The specific name comes from neo-Latin, *adesmiifolia* meaning leaves similar to plants in the *Adesmia* genus [4].

I. adesmiifolia is similar to *Indigofera australis* but leaves are much more crowded, with small obcordate leaflets and shorter flower stems [5].

Population map:

www.ala.org.au/explore/species-maps/

Natural Populations

Indigofera adesmiifolia occurs in Qld, NSW and Vic [8]. It usually grows in rocky places and is widespread but not common in woodlands, especially on the ranges and slopes [2, 4, 8, 9]. It is most commonly found on light sandy-loams or other shallow friable soils in semi-shade [10]. It tolerates moderately heavy frosts [4, 9].

It was probably more widespread and common prior to the introduction of stock grazing [4, 9].

Flowering and Seeds

The sprays of purple or rarely white pea-flowers appear in late winter to spring [4, 9, 10].

The seeds are grey-brown when mature [1]. Collect seed from middle November to early February. Monitor closely as seeds shed immediately or very soon after maturity. Ensure collection by securing nylon stockings or paper bags to fruiting branches after flowering [4, 9]. Alternatively, the pods can be harvested close to maturity (when they turn brown) and fully dried in a warm area [7].

Strip pods from branches by hand into bags or groundsheets under

the plant. Put pods in a warm place to ripen and extract seeds [1]. The cylindrical pod splits by twisting to release 5-10 hard brown seeds [3].

Clean the seeds using sieves [1] and store in paper bags [2]. Seeds have a long storage life [6].

Cultivation and Uses

Propagation is from scarified seed or cuttings, which strike readily [4, 9]. The seed has a hard coat and is usually treated [6]. Pour boiling or very hot water over seeds and soak until water cools [1, 2, 3, 4, 9]. Dry the seeds before sowing to prevent rotting. Germination takes 3-4 weeks. The seed is suitable for direct seeding in pots (2-3 seeds per pot) [4, 9] and in the field [6].

Cuttings are the best method where flower colour needs to be reproduced [10].

I. adesmiifolia is suitable for areas of low maintenance [10]. It will grow in most soils except those that are very wet, it flowers well in shade or sun and is very frost hardy. It is useful low-level cover in windbreaks, but is palatable and easily grazed out by stock. As a legume it improves soil fertility by 'fixing' nitrogen [4, 9].

Natural regeneration is from seed, particularly after fire [4, 9].

I. adesmiifolia flowers are a pollen and nectar source for many native insects, including bees and wasps and the leaves are food for butterfly caterpillars [4, 9].

To source seeds or plants:

www.grassywoodlands.org.au



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(a) Picture under License from the Australian National Botanic Gardens.

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Internet links

[8] PlantNET National Herbarium of New South Wales: <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=s&name=Indigofera~adesmiifolia>

[9] Charles Sturt University's Virtual Herbarium: <http://www.csu.edu.au/faculty/science/herbarium/sws/species/indigofera-adesmiifolia.html>

[10] Australian National Botanic Gardens & Australian National Herbarium, Harden Species List: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/greening-grainbelt/harden-species-list.xls>

Encyclopedia of life: <http://www.eol.org/pages/644621>

Atlas of Living Australia – sharing biodiversity knowledge: <http://bie.ala.org.au/search?q=Indigofera+adesmiifolia>