

Dodonaea viscosa

Common name – Sticky Hop Bush

Sticky Hop Bushes, are tall multi-stemmed shrubs up to a height of four metres. They can be found in every state and territory of Australia. However they are highly variable with seven sub-species. They are an extremely hardy species and are able to re-sprout from the base. They tolerate dry conditions and can also handle some frosts. They prefer full sun but will grow in part shade.



Leaves

The leaves are narrow and around 2cm long. Their edges may be smooth, slightly wavy or slightly toothed. The leaves are shiny, covered with a sticky resin. This gives protection against water loss making them very drought tolerant.



Flowers

The flowers are inconspicuous (less than a centimetre), with no petals. They occur during spring and summer. Male and female flowers are generally on different plants. The male flowers are insignificant whilst the females develop into 3-winged capsules. If fertilised, a hard-coated seed is produced at the base of each wing. If not fertilised the capsules develop but without seeds.



Sticky Hop Bush Flowers

Fertilised capsules can take up to 11 months to mature with unfertilised capsules maturing faster. Over this time the capsules will change colour from a green or cream colour through to a brilliant red. In part shade the capsules will not be as spectacular. These winged capsules are produced only on female or bisexual flowers and are approximately 2 cm. The plants rely on the wind for both pollination and seed dispersion.



Sticky Hop seed capsules

Uses

Juice from the roots (often boiled) has been traditionally used by Aboriginal Australians to treat toothache, cuts and stingray stings.

The colonists, impressed by the similarity in taste and looks that the seed capsules had to hops, successfully brewed a tangy, bitter but acceptable beer alternative