

Peanut Tree

Botanical Name: *Sterculia quadrifida* (Sterculiaceae/Malvaceae)

Common Name: Peanut Tree, Bush Peanut Tree, Red-fruited kurrajong, Kuman

Origin: *Sterculia* was named by the Swedish botanist, Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), after the Roman God of manure heaps, Sterculius, due to the smell of the flowers and leaves of certain species.

Distribution: The bush peanut tree is distributed through tropical rainforests, from northern New South Wales to the Northern Territory.

Australian Distribution: Top End of the Northern Territory, Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and Papua New Guinea.

Preferred Climate and Soil Types: The tree is frost and drought-tender, and although it is adaptable to a variety of soils, it prefers a moist and organic rich environment.

Description: The bush peanut tree is a medium sized deciduous tree, growing up to 10 metres high x 4 metres wide, with an open, rounded crown. It has a smooth grey bark, with large oval to heart shaped dark green leaves. Its flowers are small and greenish-yellow in colour. It bears 5 to 8 cm long fruits, singly or in groups of two to five. The seeds of the tree are borne in summer and are black and ovoid, with each pod bearing two to five seeds. When ripe they are scarlet red in colour and split open into a boat like shape.

Culture: Cultivated from fresh seed. Plant in an open and sunny position, where it is relatively fast growing. Mulch is necessary. Apply an organic fertiliser twice a year.

Fruiting Season: April to December

Harvesting: The peeled seeds have a pleasant peanut like taste. Can be roasted and crushed and sprinkled over ice cream.



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