

Melia azedarach* var. *australasica

(Meliaceae)

Common name: White cedar.

Localities: Brisbane River Bank, Grandview Rd, Kholo Creek, Moggill State Forest, Rafting Ground, Upper Brookfield; widespread and common.

Growth form: A medium deciduous tree to 8 m tall, with attractively spreading branches.

Foliage: Foliage is soft green, the leaves bipinnate, with many leaflets which are up to 7 cm long and 4 cm wide and are more-or-less toothed along the margins.

Flowers and fruit: Flowers are borne in large panicles, in spring. The individual flowers are small and mauve, and are attractively scented; they are followed by yellow fruit about 1 cm in diameter, which persist after leaf-fall in autumn.

Habitat: Occurs naturally in subtropical and dry rainforest, also in moister eucalypt forests.

Propagation and Management: Seed germinates rapidly if sown soon after collection. White cedar is quick-growing and very hardy, tolerating full sun and very low fertility. Trees are often attacked by numerous caterpillars in spring - this problem can be prevented by tying a broad band of polythene or metal around the trunk.

General: Ideal as a pioneer tree. The fruit attract various birds, including some parrots and the regent bower bird, and also flying foxes. All parts of the plant are used for medicinal purposes.

