

Aristolochia praevenosa
(Aristolochiaceae)

Common name: Richmond birdwing butterfly vine.

Localities: Not recorded from our district, but was probably native to the area before European settlement.

Growth form: A climber, with twining stems.

Foliage: Leaves are simple, up to 20 cm long and 10 cm wide, with a rounded base. They may be either hairless or hairy.

Flowers and fruit: The inflorescence is few-flowered, and the flowers are purplish and about 2 cm long. These are followed by ribbed, fleshy fruit which are 3-4 cm long.

Habitat: Occurs in coastal and sub-coastal rainforests.

Propagation and Management: Mostly propagated from cuttings. This vine is easy to grow, requiring some shade and benefiting from mulching and adequate moisture. However, it does require a free-draining soil and it responds to fertiliser. Being a climber, it requires some support.

General: The survival of the spectacular Richmond birdwing butterfly depends on this plant. Both the plant and the butterfly are endangered species, although the butterfly was once abundant around Brisbane. Near our area the butterfly has been attracted and numbers are increasing, through planting the vine. Food sources for adult butterflies include *Castanospermum australe* (black bean) and *Stenocarpus sinuatus* (firewheel tree). *Aristolochia elegans* (Dutchman's pipe) attracts the butterfly and is toxic to the larvae; it should therefore be removed.

