

Castanospermum australe

(Fabaceae)

- Common name:** Black bean.
- Localities:** Bellbowrie Bridge, Kholo Creek, Rafting Ground and frequent along watercourses throughout the district.
- Growth form:** A medium to large tree up to 40 m tall, but shorter and with a dense, dark crown when growing away from other trees.
- Foliage:** Leaves are large and pinnate, with 9-17 glossy leaflets up to 15 cm long and 5 cm wide
- Flowers and fruit:** Flowers large and showy, red and yellow, borne mostly within the canopy from spring to summer. The fruit is a large plump pod, with 3-5 chestnut-like seeds.
- Habitat:** Subtropical rainforest, particularly along streams and river banks.
- Propagation and Management:** The large seeds are easy to germinate and growth can be moderately fast, providing the soil is fertile. Black bean prefers a rich, well-drained soil with ample moisture, and growth on infertile soils can be very slow. It tolerates both full sun and light frosts.
- General:** The flowers in spring attract lorikeets, but the seeds are toxic to livestock. However, the seeds were a significant source of food for Aborigines, who had developed a complicated way to prepare them to make them safe to eat. The timber is of excellent quality, and is used for cabinet making.

