

mainland states except Vic. An extremely variable pan-tropical species, widespread in Queensland, usually on loam to clay, neutral to alkaline soils.

*Notes:* Often a palatable species when young, but strains probably vary in palatability. Not toxic to rats in laboratory tests. More salt-tolerant than

most herbaceous legumes. Sensitive to flooding. Nodulates. Self-pollinating.

*References:* 3, 16, 17, 26, 27, 31, 37, 45, 46, 50, 53, 91, 98, 111, 122, 132, 140, 141, 147, 148, 150, 155, 172, 208, 227, 235, 256, 285, 287, 291, 306.

## Scorpiurus

Prostrate annual herbs with simple leaves, continuous with the petiole. Flowers yellow to orange, small, lacking bracteoles. Stamens 10, 9 filaments joined in a dorsally split tube, 1 free. Pods coiled or twisted, jointed, indehiscent, several-seeded.

### *Scorpiurus muricatus* var. *subvillosus*

Scorpion plant

Prostrate annual with stems to 0.3m long. Stems hairless. Stipules c. 8-12mm long, persistent, joined to the petiole in the lower c.  $\frac{1}{2}$ . Leaves simple, 30-100mm long, 5-20mm wide, broadest towards the tip, the margins curving to the broadly angled tip and tapering imperceptibly into the petiole which is about as long as the blade, the 3-5 major veins parallel, very sparsely hairy.

Inflorescence an axillary raceme with 1-3 flowers at the tip of a 30-130mm peduncle. Flowers borne on c. 2mm pedicels within the axils of minute bracts. Calyx c. 5mm long, very sparsely hairy, the sepals similarly joined for c.

$\frac{1}{2}$  their length. Petals yellow to orange, c. 5mm long, the tip of the keel extended into a prominently curved beak.

Pod irregularly coiled to twisted, snake-like, 10-20mm long (c. 20-40mm long uncoiled), jointed, consisting of up to 6 or more strongly curved articles, these c. 2mm wide excluding the prominent longitudinal ribs which bear 1-1.5mm spines, indehiscent, sandy-brown when ripe. Seeds c. 2.5mm broad and long, horse-shoe shaped, plump, hairy, red-brown.

*Distribution:* D.D., Ma. A native of southern Europe. Rarely found in Queensland.

*Notes:* Nodulates. Self-pollinating.

*References:* 3, 163, 174, 287.

## Sesbania

Tall, erect, annual herbs or small perennial trees with pinnate leaves, lacking a terminal leaflet, the stipels small or lacking. Flowers yellow or blue, small or large. Stamens 10, 9 filaments joined in a dorsally split tube, 1 free. Pods long to very long, narrow, usually many-seeded.

The tree species *S. formosa* is not included in this key. *Sesbania* spp. are grazed during the wet season in the Gulf country (Bishop 1973a).

Overseas, *Sesbania* species are utilized as fibre crops, for fodder, as a source of gums which have qualities similar to those of gum arabic, as shrub legumes in alley-cropping systems, as shade species for sun-sensitive crops, as wind breaks and in erosion control. The red-flowered tree *S. grandiflora* is grown in tropical gardens.

### Key to species

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| 1. Flowers blue to pink                        | 2                     |
| Flowers yellow                                 | 3                     |
| 2. Style minutely hairy; standard c. 13mm wide | <i>S. brachycarpa</i> |
| Style hairless; standard 21-25mm wide          | <i>S. erubescens</i>  |