

Smithia

Herbs or low shrubs with small pinnate leaves lacking a terminal leaflet, lacking stipels, the leaflets opposite. Stipules extending above and below the point of attachment. Flowers small, yellow, with bracteoles. Stamens 10, the filaments joined in two groups of 5. Pods several-seeded, folded in a zig-zag structure, enclosed within the calyx.

Key to species

Flowers 1-4, clustered in axils of ordinary leaves; subtending leaves densely congested	<i>S. conferta</i>
Flowers 1-10 in long-peduncled (6-30mm) leafless racemes; leaves not congested	<i>S. sensitiva</i>

Smithia conferta

More or less spreading or erect, much-branched, soft perennial shrub to 1.2m tall. Stems hairless. Stipules 10-15mm long, joined to the stem about the mid-point, tapering to a single point above and 1-2 points below, adpressed, persistent, becoming chaffy. Leaves well separated on upper stems with 2-8 pairs of opposite leaflets. Petiole c. 1mm long, rachis 3-5mm long, with scattered long tubercle-based hairs. Leaflets 3-13mm long, 1-3mm wide, more or less parallel-sided, or tapering to the base from above the mid-point, with scattered long coarse hairs on the underside and along the margins, the tip extended to a long bristle.

Flowers in axillary clusters of 1-4 flowers, the upper leaves and flowers congested into heads c. 20mm long and wide. Flowers borne on short pedicels, which bear a pair of c. 5mm persistent bracteoles at the tip. Calyx 7-10mm long, sparsely covered with long hairs, the two upper sepals totally joined and the three lower sepals totally joined, the two groups of sepals separate to the base as two lips. Standard yellow, c. 5mm tall, 5mm wide. Wings yellow, c. 9mm long from base of calyx, exceeding the keel.



Smithia conferta, Merluna, near Weipa, 13°04'S, 142°29'E, Cult.

Pod up to 6mm long, 1.5mm wide, consisting of 5-7 indehiscent articles. Seeds c. 1mm long and wide, round, plump, reddish brown.

Distribution: Bk., Co., N.K. Also N.T., southern Asia, South-East Asia and P.N.G. Usually found in damp situations.

Notes: Of no grazing significance. Nodulates, self-pollinating.

References: 3, 16, 17, 227, 306.

Smithia sensitiva

More or less spreading, much-branched, herbaceous shrub, the stems to 1.5m long. Stems hairless. Stipules c. 10mm long, attached about the mid-point, tapering to fine points above and below, adpressed, persistent but becoming chaffy. Leaves well separated on the stem with 2-12 pairs of opposite leaflets, slightly sensitive. Petiole c. 1mm long, rachis 2-30mm long. Leaflets 4-15mm long, 2-3mm wide, the margins more or less parallel or tapering from above the mid-point to the base, the tip rounded, sparsely covered with long coarse hairs around the margins and on the underside of the mid-rib, the mid-vein extended into a bristle.

Inflorescence an axillary raceme, the 1-10 flowers clustered towards the tip of a 6-40mm peduncle. Flowers borne singly within the axils of c. 2.5mm bracts, each on a c. 2mm pedicel which bears a pair of 3-3.5mm bracteoles at the tip. Calyx 6-9mm long, hairless or with a few long hairs, the two dorsal sepals totally joined and the three lower sepals totally joined, the two groups of sepals separate to the base as two lips which may be slightly toothed. Standard yellow, c. 5mm tall and wide. Wings and keel yellow, c. 6mm long from base of calyx.

Pod c. 1.5mm wide, consisting of up to 7

indehiscent articles. Seeds c. 1mm long and wide, almost circular, plump, yellow to reddish brown.

Distribution: Co., Mo., N.K., P.C., W.B. Also southern Asia, South-East Asia, Indonesia and P.N.G.

Sophora

Woody shrubs or small trees, the leaves pinnate, with a terminal leaflet, lacking stipels. Flowers yellow, large and showy, lacking bracteoles. Stamens 10, the filaments free or joined at the base. Pod very constricted between the seeds, giving the appearance of a string of beads.

Key to species

Leaves with less than 20 leaflets; leaflets 12-30mm broad (coastal)

S. tomentosa

Leaves with more than 20 leaflets; leaflets usually less than 10mm broad (inland)

S. fraseri

Sophora fraseri

Sparsely branched woody shrub to 2m tall. Young stems densely covered with short spreading hairs. Stipules c. 2mm long, deciduous. Leaves with 21-39 opposite or slightly alternating leaflets. Petiole 10-20mm long, rachis 50-150mm long. Leaflets borne on c. 1mm petiolules, 4-25mm long, usually 2-8mm wide, broadest about the mid-point, the margins curving to the rounded base and tip, covered with short spreading hairs on both surfaces.

Inflorescence a terminal raceme 50-100mm long including the 10-60mm peduncle. Flowers crowded, borne singly within the axils of c. 2mm deciduous bracts, each on a 5-10mm pedicel. Calyx c. 4mm long, densely covered with short hairs, the teeth indistinct, c. 0.5mm long. Standard yellow, c. 10mm tall and wide. Wings and keel yellow, c. 12mm long from base of calyx.

Pod 50-120mm long, c. 8mm wide, deeply constricted to 2-4mm wide necks between the 2-5 seeds. Seeds c. 6mm long, oval, plump.

Distribution: Bur., D.D., Mo. Also N.S.W. An endemic Australian species of subcoastal ranges in the south-east.

Notes: Of no agricultural significance.

References: 17, 26, 287, 298.

Sophora tomentosa

Silver bush

Tall shrub or small tree. Young stems densely

Notes: A plant which prefers wet or swampy soil and which may occur in grazed pasture; in Indonesia reported to be palatable to cattle and also used as a pot herb. Nodulates.

References: 3, 16, 23, 154, 227, 287, 306, 314.



Sophora tomentosa, Cape Tribulation, 16°05'S, 145°28'E.

covered with short white or grey felt-like hairs. Stipules small or perhaps lacking. Leaves pinnate, usually with 9-19 leaflets, opposite or slightly alternating. Petiole 20-40mm long, rachis 80-220mm long, lacking stipels. Leaflets borne on 2-5mm petiolules, grey, 15-40mm long, 12-30mm wide, broadest about the mid-point, the margins curving to the rounded tip and base, usually densely covered with woolly felt-like hairs on both surfaces.

Inflorescence an erect terminal raceme up to 250mm or more long. Flowers crowded, borne singly within the axils of c. 3mm deciduous bracts, each on a 5-10mm pedicel which lacks bracteoles. Calyx broad, 6-10mm long, densely hairy, the teeth very short, barely noticeable. Standard yellow c. 15mm tall and wide, spreading or reflexed. Wings and keel 12-16mm long, pale yellow.

Pod pendulous, 60-200mm long, 6-10mm wide, deeply constricted to 2-3mm wide necks between