

## Red Ash or Soap Tree

*Alphitonia excelsa*



Family: Rhamnaceae

Semi-deciduous tree to 21 m



**Distribution:** Widely distributed in the Eucalypt forests of the Northern Territory and Queensland and in the coastal regions from northern Queensland to the south coast of NSW, in or near rainforests.

**Description:** Splendid natural shape is one of its most distinctive features and the foliage extends to near ground level. Flowers cover the tree with clusters of small cream blossoms in late autumn and early winter. The fruits which follow are more attractive, being ovoid, blackish drupes. Quick growing in cultivation.

**Propagation:** Germinates fairly easily from seed.

**Habitat:** Flourishes in a well-drained position, resistant to insect or disease attack. Prefers sandy soils.

**Uses:** Yaegl medicinal plant used for green ant bites, muscle injury and as an antiseptic hand wash. Fodder plant for both sheep and cattle. Its wood is useful for tool handles, cabinet work and building purposes. Food plant for the caterpillars of the Moonlight Jewel (*Hypochrysops delicia*), and the Small Green-Banded Blue (*Psychonotis caelius taygetus*) Butterflies.