



## *Clidemia hirta*

### TIBOUCHINA FAMILY

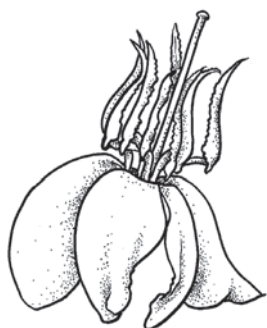
Melastomataceae

### COMMON NAMES

English: Koster's curse, soap bush

Indonesia: harendong bulu

Vietnam: cỏ saphony



### DESCRIPTION

Evergreen shrub [0.5–3 (–5) m tall], branchlets rounded, covered with large reddish-brown hairs/bristles.

**Leaves:** Light green, upper surfaces with a few hairs, lower surfaces more densely hairy, simple, oval or egg-shaped (5–18 cm long and 3–8 cm wide) with pointed tips, 5–7 prominent veins from the base running almost parallel; margins finely toothed, leaves appear wrinkled or pleated, leaves held opposite each other on stem.

**Flowers:** White or sometimes pale pink, in clusters in the leaf forks or tips of branches, on a short flower stalk (0.5–1 mm long); base of flower is swollen into a cup-shaped structure.

**Fruits:** Berries (fleshy fruits that don't open at maturity), dark blue, purplish or blackish, globular (4–9 mm across), covered in hairs/bristles; seeds are light brown (0.5–0.75 mm long).

### ORIGIN

Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and the Caribbean.

### REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornament

### INVADES

Roadsides, disturbed land, plantations, pasture, forests, forest edges/gaps, woodlands, woodland edges/gaps and riversides.

### IMPACTS

This invasive plant has the ability to form dense stands displacing native plant species. Smith (1985) characterized the impacts of *C. hirta* as 'devastating' in Hawaii, where it threatens the extinction of endemic species. In Tanzania, it suppresses native herbs (Pocs, 1989), while in Fiji, it renders grazing land useless and retards the development of rubber and cocoa plantations. In Southeast Asia, it invades orchards and rubber and oil palm plantations where it reduces yields and increases management costs (Waterhouse, 1993). It came to be known as 'Koster's curse' after being accidentally introduced to Fiji by Koster and its subsequent impacts (curse) on plantation crops. It is also toxic to livestock (Francis, 2004).





*Clidemia hirta* (L.) Don

