

Scrambling Clerodendrum (*Clerodendrum inerme*)

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This shrub has an untidy, straggling growth habit, sometimes scrambling over other plants and reaching as high as six metres. It grows only at, or just above, high tide level, usually situated behind the mangroves or beach forest, resulting in its alternative common name of Seaside Clerodendrum.

In Australia, it grows from north eastern NSW, around coastal Queensland and the Northern Territory, into north west West Australia. It is also native to South East Asia and some Pacific Islands. At the Wetlands Sanctuary, examples of this shrub are found in the Casuarina Forest. Its health and appeal vary with the seasons, sometimes appearing to be green and handsome, and at other times becoming “leggy” and losing leaves.

Flowers appear at almost any time of the year, and are attractive and unusual. Flowers are structured in groups of three to seven blossoms on small stems, originating where a leaf joins a main stem. They are white, about 15 mm in diameter, at the end of a tube up to 40 mm long, and with four long protruding maroon to purplish stamens. Flowers are followed by oval green fruit which turn black when ripe. Eventually, the ripe fruit separate into 4 portions. Birds eat and disperse the seeds.

