

## Plant of the Month - March

by Allan Carr

### *Cupaniopsis anacardioides*

Tuckeroo

**Pronunciation:** kew-pan-ee-OP-sis    anna-card-ee-OID-eez

SAPINDACEAE

**Derivation:** *Cupaniopsis*, from the genus *Cupania* (in which Australian species were first placed and named after an Italian Botanist Francesca Cupani, 1657-1710), *opsis* – having the form of, like (from Greek); *anacardioides*, like the genus *Anacardium*, (the Cashew nut is *Anacardium occidentale*), *oides* – having the form of, like (from Latin).



Leaves



Flowers, buds



Fruits

*Cupaniopsis* genus has about 60 species, 7 of which are endemic in eastern Australia. All are rainforest plants in coastal areas. *C. anacardioides* is the only species widely cultivated. Many have been planted as street trees on Bribie Island.

**Description:** *C. anacardioides* is a small to medium spreading tree with a dense crown and a short flanged trunk. It is found in the coastal scrubs of the east coast from Townsville in Queensland to Port Hacking in NSW and it is also found in coastal areas of the Northern Territory. The tree is host for at least eight native butterflies including the Common Pencilled-blue, *Candalides absimilis*.

**Leaves** are alternate and compound with 4 to 11 leaflets to 150 mm which are a dull dark green and leathery. The apex of each leaflet can be \*obtuse or \*retuse.

**Flowers** are borne towards the ends of the branches from March to July in \*panicles to 200 mm. These perfumed flowers are a greenish cream and are pollinated by native stingless bees.

**Fruits** are capsules to 15 mm across, three lobed and bright orange yellow when mature in November/ December. These split to reveal orange-red \*arils enclosing black seeds. Figbirds and Pied Currawongs feed on the fruits.

\*obtuse = rounded      \*retuse = notched

\*panicle = branched flower stem

\*aril = a fleshy outgrowth of the stalk of a seed, often succulent and/ or brightly coloured and bird or insect attracting



Habit