



BELLYACHE BUSH LOOK ALIKES



Bellyache bush is a Weed of National Significance. It can be confused with two other introduced plants – physic nut and castor oil plant. Correctly identify any potential weed before considering control measures. Warning: All three plants are toxic!

| PLANT | BELLYACHE BUSH <i>(Jatropha gossypifolia)</i> | PHYSIC NUT <i>(Jatropha curcas)</i> | CASTOR OIL PLANT <i>(Ricinus communis)</i> |
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| FORM |  <small>Photo: Kay Bailey</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erect perennial shrub with shallow root system. Grows to 4 m with most plants 2-3 m. |  <small>Photo: Biosecurity Queensland</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A drought resistant, erect perennial shrub usually to 2-4 m. |  <small>Photo: Dick Pasfield</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A tall, branching shrub that can reach the size of a small tree up to 12 m in favourable conditions. |
| STEM |  <small>Photo: Weed Management Branch, DLRM</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-stemmed. Thick, fairly soft stems with coarse glandular brown hairs. Thin bark is green or red when young, turning grey as plant matures. |  <small>Photo: Biosecurity Queensland</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thick, sappy stems and spreading branches. |  <small>Photo: Darren Gillat</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hollow stems that vary in colour from red to green. |
| LEAVES |  <small>Photo: Weed Management Branch, DLRM</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have 3-5 lobes and measure 4.5–9 cm by 5-13 cm. Margins very finely toothed, edged with sticky, gland tipped hairs. Stalks also covered in sticky hairs. Colour varies from green to bronze, red or purple. |  <small>Photo: Geoff Sainty</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smooth, green leaves with 3-5 rounded, heart-shaped or ivy-shaped lobes. |  <small>Photo: Biosecurity Queensland</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternate and glossy. Up to 45cm long and deeply divided into 7-9 toothed, pointy lobes. Unpleasant smell when crushed. |
| FLOWERS |  <small>Photo: Weed Management Branch, DLRM</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small flowers (6-9 mm across) from light red through to dark purple with yellow centre. In clusters at the end of stems. |  <small>Photo: Biosecurity Queensland</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small yellow-green flowers in clusters on stalks in upper axils. |  <small>Photo: Weed Management Branch, DLRM</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flowers occur on spikes in the forks of upper branches. Female flowers with red stigmas are at the top of the spike and yellowish-green male flowers at the bottom (neither with petals). |

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| FRUIT |  <small>Photo: Kay Bailey</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round to oblong, bright green, three-lobed, hard capsules (about 1 cm in diameter). When mature, capsules are pale green or tan. Explode when mature. |  <small>Photo: Weed Management Branch, DLRM</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yellow when young, turning black when mature and up to 4 cm. Splits when ripe into 3 sections containing 1-3 seeds. |  <small>Photo: Biosecurity Queensland</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capsule up to 2.5 cm across covered in greenish (to reddish-purple) spines. Each of the 3 segments contains 1 seed. Explode when mature. |
| SEED |  <small>Photo: Biosecurity Queensland</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brown and about 8 mm long with a fleshy, lighter coloured caruncle on one end. |  <small>Photo: Biosecurity Queensland</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large black, oblong seeds 2 cm long and 1 cm wide. |  <small>Photo: Biosecurity Queensland</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oval, shiny, bean-like up to 1.5cm with variable brownish mottling with a caruncle. |
| SEEDLINGS |  <small>Photo: Weed Management Branch, DLRM</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bright green with glossy, smooth appearance at two cotyledon stage. Density can be high – up to 300-400 per square metre. |  <small>Photo: Biosecurity Queensland</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bright matt green with multiple veins. |  <small>Photo: Biosecurity Queensland</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Darker, duller green at cotyledon and 2-leaf stage. |
| JUVENILES |  <small>Photo: Kay Bailey</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single stem with green or red bark. |  <small>Photo: Biosecurity Queensland</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single pale green stem. |  <small>Photo: Biosecurity Queensland</small> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be varying coloured, multi-stemmed with deeply indented leaves. |