

Commelinaceae
Commelina diffusa
Wandering Jew



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Field Botanist



- ETYMOLOGY** (com-el-EEN-a) After Jan & Caspar Commelin 17th-century Dutch Botanists; The species diffusa (dif-FEW-sah) spread out, wide; loosely spreading;
- LIFEFORM** Creeper 15 cm
- STATUS** Well conserved; Common; **Old name** *Commelina cyanea* (NSW have keep this name)
- OCCURS** Agnes water Q, NSW, Arnhem Land NT (PI, Mal, Mel, NG, West Indies, Mexico, America, Tropical Africa, Asia, Taiwan, Japan, Malaysia)
- HABITAT** Disturbed Damp Wet Areas;
- TOLERANCE** Coastal saltwater inundation, grows in heavy shade (plant at 50cm intervals)
- LEAVES** Alternate, 6-10 x 1.5 cm, broadly lanceolate, soft, parallel veined, crisp watery folded wavy margins arising from a closed sheath at base;
- FLOWERS** Petals, 1.5 cm, 3 on slender 3 cm stipes solitary spathes, fragile bright blue with yellow anthers a few arising from a folded green spathe; Flowers last only 1 day; **Flowering Times:** Jan, Feb, March (After rain event)
- FRUIT** Capsules, 5 mm, globular, cylindrical containing 5 seeds 2 mm brown to black;
- STEM** Loose trailer with soft weak jointed stems creep along the ground, but often produce short upright branches;
- ETHNOBOTANY** Useful groundcover in heavy shade; Young shoot cooked as a vegetable, juice used to heal wounds, to treat inflamed eyes as a digestive aid, treatment for asthma, decoction of stem & leaves boiled in water is esteemed tonic for debility general weakness or illness; Food for wallabies, rabbits good chock food; Alleviation of back and chest pains used as diuretic; contains anthocyanins;
- BEEES** Blue Banded Bee *Amegilla* sp.
- INSECTS** *Cretonotus gangis* (tiger moth) *Hypena masuralis*, *Elachistidae* sp (Moths)
- ID FEATURE** Roots creamy white + Leaves hairless + Flowers blue, flower-base 2 sides folded together; lengthwise.