

1. DIOSCOREA, Linn.

(Helmia, Kunth.)

Flowers diœcious. Stamens in the Australian species 6. Capsule 3-angled or 3-lobed, opening longitudinally at the angles, often leaving their nervelike margins free. Seeds winged.—Underground rhizomes often tuberous and known by the name of *Yams*. Stems twining.

A large tropical and subtropical genus, especially numerous in South America. Of the three Australian species, one is common in tropical Asia, the two others, as far as hitherto known, are endemic. The tubers of all three said to be eaten by the natives or colonists as native yams.

Perianth-segments broad. Capsule broader than long. Seeds winged all round.

Leaves frequently opposite, ovate-cordate or triangular-hastate with a broad open basal sinus 1. *D. transversa*.

Leaves all alternate, linear or linear-lanceolate, or the lower smaller ones triangular-hastate 2. *D. hastifolia*.

Perianth-segments narrow. Capsule longer than broad. Seeds winged at one end only. Leaves alternate, ovate-cordate . . . 3. *D. sativa*.

D. lucida, R. Br. Prod. 295, described from a specimen without flowers or fruit, gathered on the Endeavour river by Banks and Solander, is evidently a species of *Roxburghia*, and probably *R. javanica*, Miq.

Dioscorea bulbifera

2. *D. hastifolia*, *Enal. in Fl. Preiss.* n. 33. A smaller species than *D. transversa*, with slender almost filiform twining stems. Lower leaves triangular-hastate, 3- or 5-nerved, under 1 in. long and sometimes as broad at the base as long, the upper ones all linear-lanceolate or linear, entire, $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. long. Male spikes $\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. long, solitary in the axils of floral leaves, the upper ones appearing paniculate owing to the reduction of the subtending leaves to small bracts. Perianth-segments obtuse, nearly as large as in *D. transversa* but not so broad. Stamens similarly inserted in the centre of the flower round a minute rudimentary pistil. Female racemes very short, bearing usually only 2 or 3 flowers. Perianth small, with orbicular segments. Fruit and seeds of *D. transversa* or rather smaller, on a shorter stipes.—Kunth, *Enum.* v. 379.

W. Australia. Swan river, *Drummond*, 1st coll. n. 821, *Preiss*, n. 1954; Champion bay and Murchison river, *Oldfield*; Pinjarrah, *J. S. Pries*.