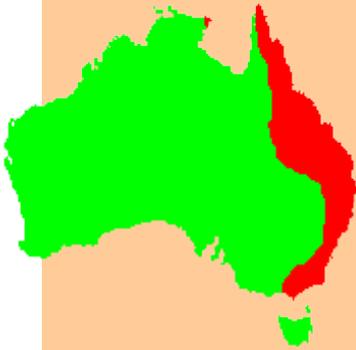


Dendrophthoe vitellina



Family: Loranthaceae

Distribution: Open forests in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, often parasitic on species in the Myrtaceae.

Common Name: No generally accepted common name other than the generic 'mistletoe'.

Derivation of Name: *Dendrophthoe*... From Greek *dendro*, a tree and *phthoe* to waste away, referring to the often deleterious effect of the parasite on trees.

vitellina...From Latin *vitellus*, egg yolk and the suffix *inus*, resembling. Derivation uncertain - possibly referring to the colour of the flower or fruit in the type form.

Conservation Status: Not considered to be at risk in the wild.

General Description:

Dendrophthoe is a genus of parasitic plants. There are about 30 species with six native to Australia.



Dendrophthoe vitellina

Photo: Brian Walters

Dendrophthoe vitellina is an erect or pendulous species with elongated, greyish-green, elliptical leaves to about 15 cm long. It occurs on a range of species but is most common on plants in the

myrtle family (Myrtaceae) such as *Eucalyptus*. Flowers are seen in spring or summer and they are very attractive being narrowly tubular in shape to about 25-50 mm long with the ends of the tube turned backwards. The flowers are yellow to red in colour and are followed by yellow or red fleshy fruits about 12 - 15 mm diameter.

Mistletoes, generally, are not often cultivated as they are regarded as having a detrimental effect on their hosts. This is true if there is a severe infestation but is not likely in a controlled garden environment. It is unknown if *Dendrophthoe vitellina* can be readily cultivated but other species have been established simply by removing the sticky seeds from the fruit and attaching them to a suitable branch. This replicates the way they become established naturally where the fruits are eaten by birds and the seeds deposited in the bird's droppings.