

## NOTES

### A NOTE ON THE FIRST FRUITING OF LOCALLY GROWN MAPLE SILKWOOD (*FLINDERSIA BRAYLEYANA*) IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA

Hashim Md. Noor

Forest Research Institute Malaysia, Kepong, 52109 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Maple silkwood (*Flindersia brayleyana*) is an exotic species that belongs to the family Rutaceae and originated from Queensland, Australia. The species was first introduced into Peninsular Malaysia in the early 1950s and planted in several localities. One of the experimental plots is located at Bukit Tapah Forest Reserve (4° 12'N, 101° 15'E), along the 17th mile road to Cameron Highlands. The 0.2 ha plot was established in August 1963 at an initial spacing of 3.66 × 3.66 m. The site is a hill slope with south easterly aspect and elevation of about 480 m above sea level. Its soil is of yellow brown sandy loam derived from granite. The area receives a heavy annual rainfall of about 3600 mm, which is equivalent to that in its natural habitat.

During a field visit to the experimental plot in February 1989, I found that 66% of the trees bore fruits, and some of the fruits had already fallen on the ground. The scaly fruits oblong in shape with sharp tips measured about 5 to 7 × 3 cm. Some of the mature fruits (brown in colour) were collected from the trees and brought back to FRIM and sun dried for a few days to induce splitting of the fruits. The fruits split longitudinally into four to five boat-shaped compartments (Figure 1) and containing two winged seeds (Figure 2). The seeds measured about 5 × 2 cm. A medium size fruit (size: 7.5 × 3 cm) contained eight to ten seeds. A kilogram of dry seeds comprised about 13,500 seeds, and gave 90% germination within the first week of sowing in the nursery bed (Figure 3).

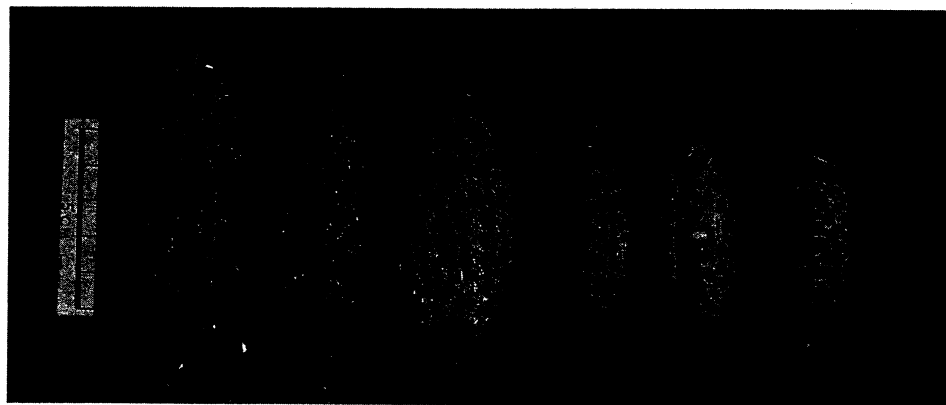


Figure 1. The fruits of locally grown maple silkwood

It is interesting to note that the maple silkwood trees in Bukit Tapah F.R. were able to produce viable seeds, whilst the others in the lowland sites planted on the same date or earlier including the oldest plot established in 1953 at FRIM, Kepong, were still immature and resumed their juvenile phase. It is still unknown what are the factors

that triggered evocation (flower induction) of the species in this locality. It is probably due to a combination of environmental factors, for example temperature, light intensity, water stress, and nutritional status, which are known to induce flowering in crop trees (Sedgley & Griffin 1989). This flowering conundrum is by no means a prerogative of this species alone but is also found in other tropical trees as well.

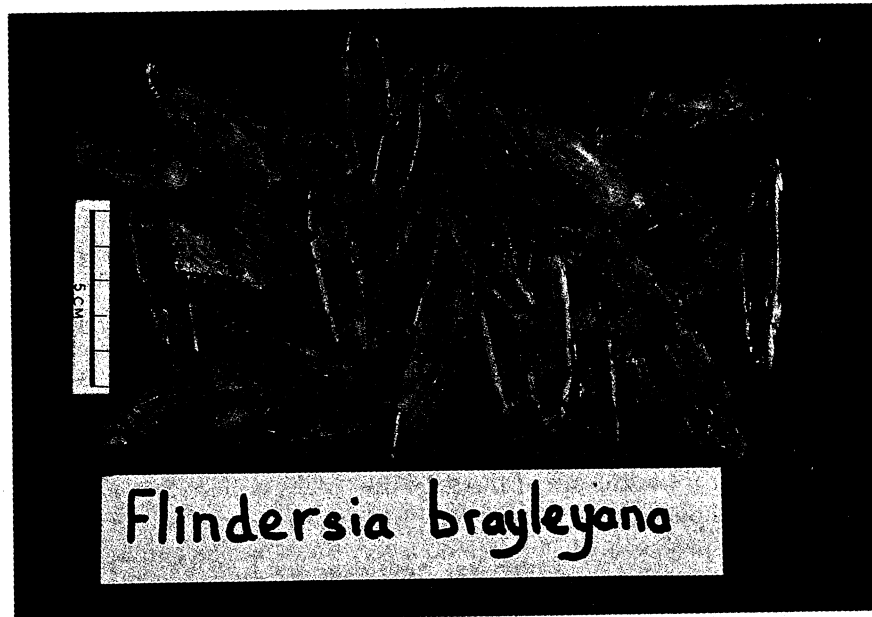


Figure 2. The seeds of maple silkwood

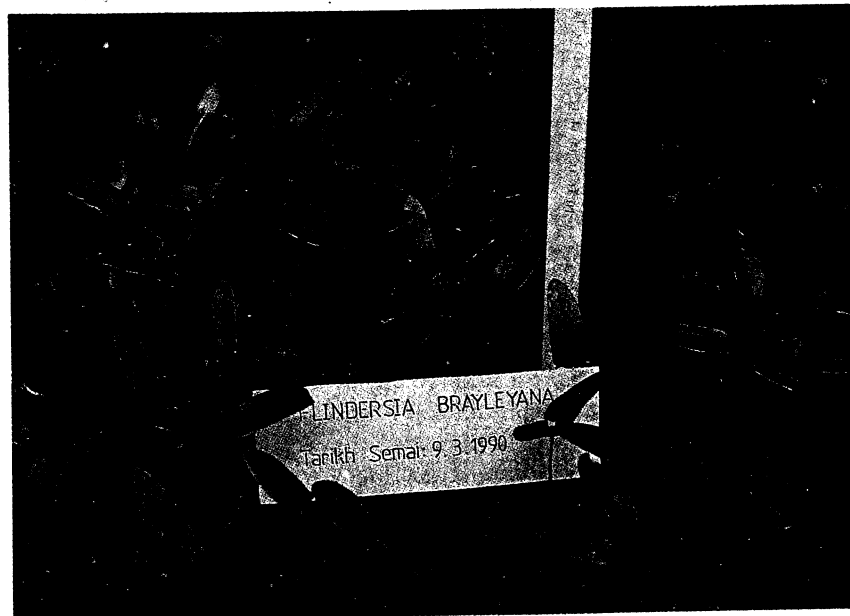


Figure 3. Seedlings of maple silkwood about one week after sowing in the germination bed at the nursery