

You are viewing one of thousands of biographies – click below for more, including Search box and access to Plant associated organisations.

[Plant Biographies](#)

[Bibliography](#)

Grevillea robusta

SILK OAK is a semi-evergreen shrub or tree. Native to eastern Australia it has small, honeysuckle-like, orange or yellow flowers.

It is also known as Australian silk oak, *Australische Seideneiche* (German), *Chêne blanc d'Australie* (French), Golden pine, *Grevílea* (Portuguese), Grevillea, *Grevillea robuste* (French), *Kawilia* (Tanzanian), Lacewood, *Mubariti* (Kikuyu), Silk bark oak, *Silkeeg* (Danish), Silk oak grevillea, Silky oak, *Silvergrevillia* (Swedish), Silver oak, Southern silky-oak, and Warragarra.

The flowers are attractive to bees and birds. The boat-shaped, winged seeds can glide for long distances.

Warning – the sap is poisonous and can cause skin irritation.

Robusta is derived from Latin *robusti*- (strong, stout) meaning 'stout or strong growth'.

Silk oak can be found growing as a shade tree in pepper (*Piper nigrum*), tea (*Camellia sinensis*) and coffee (*Coffea*) plantations and is also cultivated as a living windbreak – let alone for ornamental qualities.

Its leaves provide a green manure, and fodder. The flowers yield a valuable honey.

The attractively grained, hard and durable, light brown wood is used for turning, cabinetwork, panelling, and parquet flooring. It is also used to make air freight cases, and railway sleepers. Locally it is also burnt as fuel.

It is believed that silk oak was introduced to Sri Lanka in about 1856.

As can happen with an introduced plant Hawaii, where silk oak first appeared in 1870, has found it to be invasive and now regards it as a pest.

The tree is most familiar in western Europe and North America as a pot plant – although authorities note that it is rare grown this way in its native Australia.