

# *Corymbia ferriticola*

## Pilbara ghost gum

### Classification

Corymbia | Blakearia

### Nomenclature

***Corymbia ferriticola*** (Brooker & Edgecombe) K.D.Hill & L.A.S.Johnson, *Teloepa* 6: 446 (1995).

*Eucalyptus ferriticola* Brooker & Edgecombe, *Nuytsia*, 5: 373 (1986). T: Western Australia: Wittenoom Gorge, 30 Oct. 1983, *M.I.H. Brooker 8314* & *W.B. Edgecombe*; holo: PERTH; iso: CANB, K, MEL, NSW.

*Corymbia ferriticola* subsp. *sitiens* L.A.S.Johnson & K.D.Hill, *Teloepa* 6: 447 (1995). T: Western Australia: 49.9 km S from the northern end of the Alfred and Marie Range, between range and Lake Gruszka, *M.I.H. Brooker 10704*, 14 Apr. 1991; holo: NSW; iso: CANB, DNA, PERTH.

### Description

**Mallee or Tree** to 15 m tall, but often much shorter. Forming a lignotuber.

**Bark** usually smooth over the entire trunk, powdery, white to pink, weathering light brown to grey, sometimes with a small stocking of rough grey tessellated bark at the base.

**Branchlets** lacking oil glands in the pith; smooth.

**Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm):** stems rounded in cross-section, setose but becoming smooth with age; juvenile leaves opposite to sub-opposite and shortly petiolate, cordate to ovate to lanceolate, 3.5–8 cm long, 1.3–3.7 cm wide, base lobed to rounded, dull grey-green.

**Adult leaves** alternate, petiole 0.3–1.2 cm long; blade lanceolate, sometimes undulate, 4–10 cm long, 0.6–2.2 cm wide, base usually tapering to petiole, occasionally rounded, concolorous, dull to slightly glossy, grey-green to green, penniveined, densely to very densely reticulate, intramarginal vein present, oil glands abundant and island, but obscure.

**Inflorescence** axillary compound, condensed with peduncles short, 0–0.2 cm long, buds 7 per umbel, pedicels 0.2–0.5 cm long. **Mature buds** pyriform, 0.4–0.5 cm long, 0.3–0.4 cm wide, smooth (not scurfy), scar present (outer operculum shed during bud development), operculum flattened, stamens inflexed, anthers oblong, versatile, dorsifixed, dehiscing by longitudinal slits (non-confluent), style long, stigma tapered, locules usually 4, the ovules not arranged in distinct vertical rows on the placentae. Flowers whitish.

**Fruit** pedicellate (pedicels 0.1–0.5 cm long), truncate-ovoid to more or less cylindrical, sometimes campanulate, 0.6–1 cm long, 0.4–0.9 cm wide, thin-walled, disc vertically descending, valves 4, enclosed.

**Seeds** brown, round and flattened (saucer-shaped), usually with a small membranous flange around the edge, 3–5 mm long, surface smooth, sometimes slightly lacunose, hilum ventral.

**Cultivated seedlings (measured at node 10):** stems round in cross-section, setose throughout, leaves shortly petiolate, opposite, ovate, 4–11.5 cm long, 2.2–5 cm wide, dull yellow-green, apex acute, base rounded to tapering to the petiole, rarely lobed, usually setose on the under surface until at least node 17.

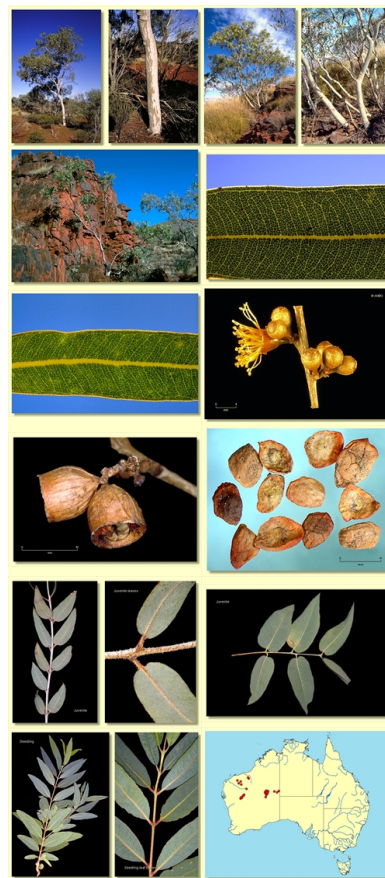
### Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in January and December.

### Notes

A mallee or small straggly tree with the main distribution in the ironstone hills of the Pilbara region in Western Australia, but with sporadic occurrences further south towards Mount Augustus and Meekatharra and east to the Gibson Desert on Mount Beadell and near Lake Gruszka, and the northern fringe of the Great Victoria Desert in Western Australia. *Corymbia ferriticola* has smooth bark, often pink-brown to pale grey, but finally white and powdery. The juvenile leaves are ovate to lanceolate and scabrid. The adult leaves are grey-green to green, glabrous and lanceolate.

*C. ferriticola* is a distinctive species within its natural range, differing from the other common ghost gum species, *C. candida*, in having a



crown of alternate leaves that are glabrous (smooth) with a tapering leaf base, never lobed, whilst *C. candida* has opposite leaves with lobed to rounded often stem-clasping leaf bases, and may be glabrous or quite scabrid. Both species have thin-walled fruit like all ghost gums. Within this zone there are four other white, smooth-barked eucalypts— *E. camaldulensis* subsp. *refulgens*, and subsp. *arida* along rivers, *E. victrix* in a variety of habitats and *E. leucophloia* subsp. *leucophloia* on ironstone hills—all easily distinguished from the ghost gums by the small fruit with valves easily visible (near rim level or exerted).

*C. ferritcola* subsp. *sitiens*, from remote stony to rocky country between Carnegie and the Alfred and Marie Range in Western Australia, was distinguished from subsp. *ferritcola* by having slightly narrower and thicker-textured adult leaves and narrower intermediate leaves. Collections are few and documentation of juvenile and intermediate growth phases poor. Consequently subsp. *sitiens* is not recognised as differing significantly by the authors of EUCLID.

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#### **MORE ABOUT GHOST GUMS**

#### Origin of Name

*Corymbia ferritcola*: Latin *ferriti*, of iron and *cola*, dweller, referring to the dominant ironstone hills where the species occurs.

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