

Corymbia ferruginea subsp. *ferruginea*

Classification

Corymbia | Rufaria

Nomenclature

Corymbia ferruginea (Schauer) K.D.Hill & L.A.S.Johnson, *Telopea* 6: 343 (1995) subsp. ***ferruginea***.

Eucalyptus ferruginea Schauer in Walpers, *Rep. Bot. Syst.* 2: 926 (1843). T: Northern Territory: Vanderlin I., 25 Dec. 1802, *R.Brown & F.Bauer (Bennet 4781)*; holotype: W; isotypes: BRI, D, E, MEL, NSW.

Description

Straggly tree 12 m tall. Forming a lignotuber.

Bark rough to small limbs, thick, tessellated to flaky, yellowish brown to grey-brown over pink.

Branchlets lack oil glands in the pith; younger branchlets scabrid, densely covered with reddish brown (ferruginous) bristle-glands that have short radiating hairs.

Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm): stems rounded in cross-section, densely setose with short ferruginous bristle-glands (setae); juvenile leaves opposite, sessile to subsessile, elliptical to oblong, 6–14 cm long, (1.5)2.5–7 cm wide, the base stem-clasping to lobed, margin undulate, apex rounded and apiculate, rusty green, setose with bristle-glands.

Crown of juvenile leaves, opposite, rarely a few sub-opposite, sessile or on very short petioles (0–0.8 cm); blade broadly lanceolate to ovate or elliptical, 6.3–18 cm long, 3–9 cm wide, undulate, base usually amplexicaul or lobed, margin entire, apex pointed or rounded and apiculate, concolorous, dull, green but brown near main veins, scabrid with short rusty bristle-glands, side-veins at a wide angle to the midrib and widely spaced, looping to form intramarginal vein, reticulation very dense, oil glands apparently absent.

Inflorescence terminal compound and prominently branched with rhachis internodes and peduncles very densely clothed in bristle-glands that are hairy and rusty brown, peduncles rounded to angular, 0.4–3.5 cm long, buds 3 or 7 per umbel, sessile or pedicellate (pedicels 0–0.5 cm long). **Mature buds** obovoid to pyriform, 0.7–1.4 cm long, 0.5–0.8 cm wide, setose and whitish scurfy, scar absent (both opercula shed together at flowering), operculum shallowly rounded, sometimes apiculate also, stamens inflexed, all fertile, anthers versatile, dorsifixed, oblong, dehiscing by longitudinal slits, style long and straight, stigma blunt and papillose (mop like), locules 4, with ca 3 or 5 vertical ovule rows, or the rows indistinct on the placentae. Flowers pale creamy yellow.

Fruit sessile or pedicellate (pedicels 0–0.5 cm long), urceolate with a short erect neck or lacking this, 1.8–3.3 cm long, 1.5–2.9 cm wide, surface slightly rough, disc descending vertically, valves 4, enclosed.

Seeds brown, 9–15 mm long, ellipsoidal with terminal wing, hilum ventral.

Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10): not grown.

Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in January, February, March and April.

Notes

Corymbia ferruginea is a bloodwood tree species found in woodlands from the central Kimberley region of Western Australia through the Top End of the Northern Territory to far north-west of Queensland, and on some islands in the western Gulf of Carpentaria. It is characterised by its extensive rough tessellated bark, crown of opposite, often undulate leaves, highly branched terminal inflorescences, and large fruit. The young branchlets and newly formed leaves, inflorescence internodes and buds are all densely covered with bristle-glands (setae) that are adorned with many simple short brown hairs giving a rusty appearance. As leaves in the crown age they weather to become less noticeably hairy but usually still feel rough.

The presence of rust-coloured "stellate" hairs is a feature shared with only one other eucalypt, *C. abbreviata*, in which they are restricted to the branches (internodes) within the inflorescence and absent from buds and crown leaves. Also the inflorescence of *C. abbreviata* is much reduced in size, compared with *C. ferruginea*, and its buds are pink-red and smooth. The geographic range of *C. abbreviata* is within that of *C. ferruginea*. There are two subspecies of *C. ferruginea*:



C. ferruginea subsp. **ferruginea**

Is largely confined to the monsoonal Top End on the Northern Territory including Elcho Island and the Wessel Islands of north-east Arnhem Land, extending into the north of Western Australia north of Wyndham, and into Queensland west of Burketown, also on Groote Eylandt and Maria Island in the Gulf of Carpentaria. It occurs on sandy to gravelly sites. The crown leaves are sessile or shortly petiolate (petioles to ca 0.5 cm long) with the base of the leaf usually stem-clasping or lobed and the majority of leaves wider than in subsp. *stypophylla*.

C. ferruginea subsp. **stypophylla**

Is found in seasonally drier, more inland areas, from Kurunjie, Mornington and Gibb River area of the central Kimberley Region of Western Australia east across the northern fringe of the Tanami Desert to Renner Springs in the Northern Territory. It differs from subsp. *ferruginea* in having strongly petiolate (petioles 0.5–2.6 cm long) crown leaves with lobed, rounded to truncate or tapering leaf bases. Plants in the Mornington area have rusty bristle-glands only on the youngest soft stems and newest leaf growth and are quickly lost with age.

Plants morphologically intermediate between the two subspecies occur in some areas, e.g. Timber Creek, Daly Waters to Renner Springs, and Mainoru in the Northern Territory. These usually have crown leaves with petioles ca 0.5 cm long.

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Origin of Name

Eucalyptus ferruginea: Latin *ferrugo*, iron rust.

subsp. *stypophylla*: Greek *stypos*, a stalk and *phylon*, a leaf.

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