

# *Eucalyptus blakelyi*

## Blakely's redgum

### Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Exsertaria | Erythroxylon

### Nomenclature

**Eucalyptus blakelyi** Maiden, *Crit. Revis. Eucalyptus* 4: 43 (1917).



T: Pilliga scrub, 10–15 miles [16–24 km] from Coonabarabran towards Rocky Glen, NSW, 11 Aug. 1911, *H.I. Jensen 129*; holo: NSW.

*E. blakelyi* var. *irrorata* Blakely, *Key Eucalypts* 131 (1934). T: numerous syntypes cited, e.g. Tambaroora, NSW, 1 Aug. 1911, *R.H. Cabbage 1786*; syn: NSW.

*E. blakelyi* var. *parvifructa* Blakely, *Key Eucalypts* 132 (1934). T: Wollongawah near Tumut, NSW, 15 Apr. 1932, *W.A.W. de Beuzeville s.n.*; holo: NSW; iso: CANB.

### Description

**Tree** to 25 m tall. Forming a lignotuber.

**Bark** smooth throughout or with some loose rough grey bark at base of trunk, smooth bark pale grey, cream and white with patches of yellow, pink, brown or orange.

**Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm):** stem square in cross-section, sometimes prominently winged also, occasionally glaucous; juvenile leaves petiolate, opposite for a few pairs then alternate, usually ovate, 4–10 cm long, 3.3–7 cm wide, usually blue-green.

**Adult leaves** alternate, petiole 1–2.5 cm long; blade lanceolate or falcate, 6–20 cm long, 0.7–4.5 cm wide, base tapering to petiole, concolorous, glossy or dull, green to blue-green, side-veins greater than 45° to midrib, moderately to densely reticulate, intramarginal vein parallel to and well removed from margin, oil glands mostly island.

**Inflorescence** axillary unbranched, peduncles 0.5–1.9 cm long, buds 7 to ?15, pedicellate (pedicels 0.1–0.7 cm long). **Mature buds** narrowly ovoid to fusiform (0.8–1.4 cm long, 0.3–0.6 cm wide), green to creamy or glaucous, scar present, operculum conical to horn-shaped (0.5–1.1 cm long), stamens erect, anthers cuboid to oblong, versatile, dorsifixed, dehiscent by longitudinal slits (non-confluent), style long, stigma blunt, locules 3 or 4, the placentae each with 6 vertical ovule rows. Flowers white.

**Fruit** pedicellate (pedicels 0.1–0.7 cm long), hemispherical or truncate-globose, 0.2–0.5 cm long, 0.4–0.8 cm wide, disc raised and convex or oblique, or disc level, valves 3 or 4, strongly exerted.

**Seeds** black, brown or grey, 0.5–1.5 mm long, pyramidal or cuboid, dorsal surface pitted, hilum terminal.

**Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10):** cotyledons reniform to oblong; stems square in cross-section, rarely glaucous; leaves always petiolate, opposite for 4 to 8 nodes then alternate, ovate to broadly so, 4.8–13 cm long, 2.5–7 cm wide, base tapering or truncate, green, blue-green or rarely glaucous.

### Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in October, November and December.

It has been used for fencing, firewood, gums, fuel and honey.

### Notes

A small to medium-sized tableland red gum tree distributed from Victoria, where it occurs mainly north of the Great Dividing Range, through the tablelands of New South Wales to far south-eastern Queensland. It is often found in seasonally water-logged depressions, although in Victoria and southern New South Wales it also grows on stony rises. *E. blakelyi* is characterised by its smooth bark (sometimes with accumulated rough bark at the base), its buds with a long narrow acute operculum, its dull, broadly ovate to elliptical juvenile leaves and the black, toothed, single-coated seed.



Ovule cluster.

*Eucalyptus blakelyi* belongs to the group of red gums which is distinguished by having buds with the stamens mostly erect, fruit where the disc is united to the ovary roof, and by the black, toothed, cuboid to pyramidal single-coated seed. Fifteen species belong to this group: *E. amplifolia*, *E. blakelyi*, *E. chloroclada*, *E. dealbata*, *E. dwyeri*, *E. flindersii*, *E. gillenii*, *E. glaucina*, *E. infera*, *E. kabiiana*, *E. nandewarica*, *E. nudicaulis*, *E. tereticornis*, *E. terrica* and *E. vicina*.

*E. blakelyi* resembles *E. tereticornis*, which is notably a taller tree of more coastal habitats and has a slightly longer operculum swollen at the base. *E. blakelyi* is occasionally glaucous in the buds, showing its affinity with *E. dealbata*, which has a somewhat overlapping distribution but which occurs on stonier sites more on the western slopes of the tablelands in New South Wales and into southern Queensland. *E. blakelyi* sometimes intergrades with *E. dealbata* and *E. dwyeri* where distributions overlap. Both *E. dwyeri* and *E. dealbata* have a much shorter operculum than *E. blakelyi*. *E. dwyeri* can be further distinguished by having narrow juvenile leaves. *E. amplifolia* from the subcoastal and tableland areas of New South Wales extending just across the border into Queensland, differs by having larger orbicular to deltoid glossy juvenile leaves. (Juvenile leaves of *E. blakelyi* are normally ovate to orbicular and dull green to sometimes slightly glaucous.) Two other closely related species are *E. chloroclada*, from the western slopes and plains of New South Wales, from the Pilliga area northwards into the Texas, Cracow, Tambo, Dirranbandi area of south-east Queensland; and *E. terrica*, from the Inglewood and Warwick region of south-east Queensland. Both differ by normally having thin red-brown to brown rough bark on their trunk. However in some parts of Queensland, *E. chloroclada* can be smoothed-bark. In this situation, *E. chloroclada* can be separated by having the disc of the fruit flat or only slightly raised (usually steeply raised in *E. blakelyi*) and by having buds with a shorter operculum than *E. blakelyi*. On stony sites in far western New South Wales, north and west of the Lachlan River west almost to the River Darling is *E. vicina*. It has buds similar in shape to those of *E. dealbata* and *E. dwyeri* and all three are usually much shorter in the operculum length than *E. blakelyi*. *E. nandewarica* occurs in an enclave in foothills near Kaputar north-east of Coonabarabran and differs from *E. blakelyi* by the lower stature, narrowly lanceolate juvenile leaves and small buds (sometimes in threes) with inflexed stamens. *E. glaucina*, from the low coastal ranges and tablelands of central-northern New South Wales, differs marginally by having coarser buds and adult leaves. *E. kabiiana*, from Mt Beerwah in the Glasshouse Mountains, differs by having lanceolate to broadly lanceolate, dull, grey-green juvenile leaves and buds with a longer narrow operculum like *E. tereticornis*. *E. flindersii*, from the slopes and summits of peaks in the Northern Flinders Range and some near-by areas of South Australia, has broadly ovate to ovate, dull, green to grey-green juvenile leaves and inflorescences which are commonly 3-budded in each umbel. *E. gillenii*, from the central and south-western part of central Australia, and *E. nudicaulis*, from the Mt Isa region in the north-western part of Queensland, are easily distinguished by having lanceolate juvenile leaves. *E. infera*, an odd eucalypt from the Warwick region in Queensland, has typical red gum buds and fruit but has juvenile leaves similar to the swamp gum *E. camphora* that are ovate to orbicular, with an emarginate apex and margins often with shallow crenulations.

Within its area of occurrence, *E. blakelyi* may be confused with other smooth-barked red gums from the series *Liberivalvae*, i.e. *E. prava*, *E. parramattensis* and *E. seeana*. *E. blakelyi* can be distinguished by having fruit with an ascending disc that is fused to the remains of the ovary roof, unlike the annular disc of series *Liberivalvae* that is free from the remains of the ovary roof.

## MORE ABOUT RED GUMS AND OTHER ASSOCIATED GROUPS

### Origin of Name

*Eucalyptus blakelyi*: after William Faris Blakely (1875–1941). William Blakely was born in Tenterfield, northern New South Wales, and spent most of his youth in rural surrounds. In 1898 he was appointed to the staff of the Jenolans Caves and in 1900 transferred to the gardens staff at the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney. In 1913 he joined the staff of the National Herbarium, initially as a botanical assistant but later as a botanist and remained in that position until his retirement in 1940. He was a co-worker in J.H.Maiden's monumental revision of the genus *Eucalyptus* and in 1934 published *A Key to the Eucalypts*, the only one-volume publication with descriptions of all species to that time, with many new species formally described for the first time.

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