

Eucalyptus canescens subsp. *canescens*

Ooldea Range mallee

Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Dumaria | Rufispermae

Nomenclature

Eucalyptus canescens D.Nicolle, *Nuytsia* 11: 377 (1997) subsp. **canescens**.



T: just S of Oak Valley, north of Cook, South Australia, 29° 24'55"S, 130° 43'52"E, 14 Sept. 1995, *D.Nicolle 1504*; holotype: PERTH; isotype: AD, CANB.

Description

Mallee to 3 m tall. Forming a lignotuber.

Bark rough, grey and flaky on stems and branches to ca 5 cm diameter, smooth above, light grey over brown.

Branchlets white with wax, oil glands present in pith.

Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm): stems square to rounded in cross-section, glaucous; juvenile leaves always petiolate, opposite at lowest nodes only then alternate, ovate, 6–10 cm long, 4.5–5.5 cm wide, coarse, thick, dull, grey-green to glaucous.

Adult leaves alternate, petioles 1.5–2.5 long; blade ovate to lanceolate, (6)7.5–12.5(14.5) cm long, (1.7)2–5.8 cm wide, base tapering to petiole, margin entire, apex pointed, concolorous, dull, blue-grey to grey-green or slightly glaucous, side-veins at an acute or wider angle to midrib, reticulation dense to very dense, intramarginal vein remote from margin, oil glands intersectional.

Inflorescence axillary unbranched, peduncles 0.8–2.2 cm long, buds 7, or 9 or 11 per umbel, pedicels 0.1–0.5 cm long. **Mature buds** ovoid to obovoid to pyriform (0.9–1.4 cm long, 0.8–0.9 cm wide), usually glaucous, scar present, operculum rounded to conical and radially striate (0.4–0.7 cm long), stamens inflexed, anthers cuboid to wedge-shaped, versatile, sub-dorsifixed, dehiscent by longitudinal slits, style long and straight, stigma more or less rounded, locules 4 or 5, the placentae each with 4 vertical rows of ovules. Flowers creamy white.

Fruit pedicellate (pedicels 0.1–0.6 cm long), cupular to shortly cylindrical, hemispherical or obconical, 0.8–1.2 cm long, 0.9–1.2(2) cm wide, smooth to slightly ribbed, glaucous, disc descending, valves 4 or 5, near rim level.

Seeds reddish brown and glossy, 1.5–3.5 mm long, flattened-ovoid, dorsal surface shallowly reticulate, hilum ventral.

Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10): cotyledons reniform; stems square in cross-section, glaucous; leaves always petiolate, opposite for 1 to 5 nodes then alternate, ovate, 3.5–8 cm long, 2–4.5 cm wide, glaucous.

Flowering Time

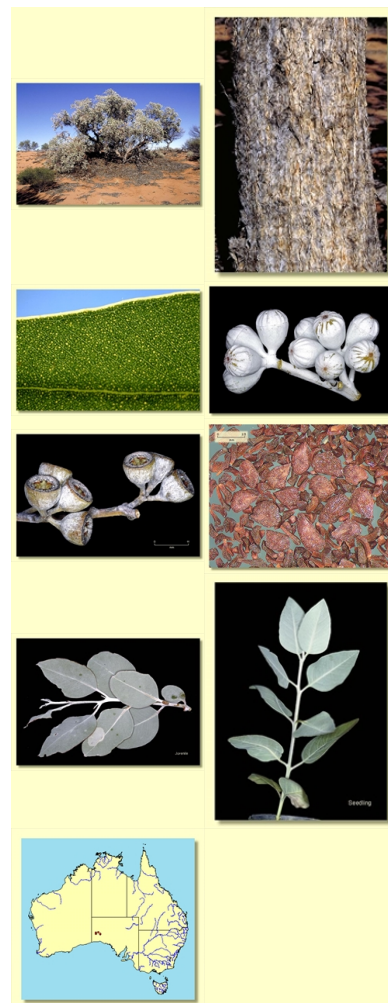
Flowering time unknown.

Notes

Eucalyptus canescens is a mallee species occurring in the Great Victoria Desert in South Australia extending into Western Australia near Forrest Lakes. It is seen readily in the red sand dune country along the Cook – Vokes Hill track, its distribution extending east towards Maralinga and Ooldea. The bark is rough and flaky over part or most of the stems. The adult leaves are dull and the opercula ribbed.

In the classification of Brooker (2000) *Eucalyptus canescens* belongs in *Eucalyptus* subgenus *Symphyomyrtus* section *Dumaria* having these features: buds initially with two opercula the outer shed early, stamens strongly inflexed, ovules in 4 rows on the placentae and cotyledons reniform. Within section *Dumaria* the species belongs to a large sub-group of closely related species (series *Rufispermae*, 37 described species and subspecies) diagnosed by glandular pith in the branchlets, anthers cuboid to wedge-shaped, versatile, and by the reddish brown and glossy, flattish seeds which are unique to the series.

The only other Great Victoria Desert species in series *Rufispermae* is *E. gypsophila* which has narrower leaves and slightly smaller buds and fruit than *E. canescens*, and occurs around salt lakes on red sands over limestone.



There are two subspecies:

E. canescens subsp. **canescens**

The typical subspecies is strongly glaucous on the branchlets, buds and fruits while the leaves are blue-grey. The distribution is much wider than subsp. *beadellii*

E. canescens subsp. **beadellii**

This form is rare, being known from a small area on the Cook–Vokes Hill track. It differs from the typical subspecies by the completely non-glaucous buds and fruits, and the green, not blue-grey, adult leaves.

Origin of Name

Eucalyptus canescens: Latin *canescens*, becoming grey, referring to the glaucous branchlets, buds and fruits.

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