

# *Eucalyptus confluens*

## Kimberley gum

### Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Platysperma

### Nomenclature

***Eucalyptus confluens*** W.Fitzg. ex Maiden, J. & Proc. Roy. Soc. New South Wales 49: 317 (1916).

T: Summit of Mt Behn, Western Australia, May 1905, *W.V.Fitzgerald 687* ; lecto: NSW, fide J.H.Maiden, *Crit. Revis. Eucalyptus* 4: 177 (1919); isolecto: PERTH.

### Description

**Tree** to 8 m tall, sometimes with drooping or pendulous branches. Forming a lignotuber.

**Bark** smooth throughout, powdery white over pale pink, weathering in patches to grey.

**Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm):** stems square in cross-section, non-glaucous, smooth; leaves sub-opposite to alternate, petiolate, orbicular to broadly ovate, 4-7.5 cm long, 3-4.5 cm wide, base rounded to tapering, rarely truncate, apex rounded to broadly pointed, dull green.

**Adult leaves** alternate, petioles 1–2.5(3.3) cm long; blade lanceolate to rarely falcate, 6–15(17) cm long, 0.9–2.2 cm wide, base tapering to petiole, margin entire, apex pointed, concolorous, glossy, green, side-veins acute, less than 45° to the midrib or rarely at a wider angle, reticulation dense to very dense, intramarginal vein close to margin, oil glands apparently absent.

**Inflorescence** axillary unbranched, peduncles 0.4–1.0 cm long, buds 7, sessile to shortly pedicellate (pedicels 0–0.2 cm long). **Mature buds** obovoid to ovoid to globular, 0.5–0.8 cm long, 0.3–0.5 cm wide, non-glaucous, scar present, operculum rounded to bluntly conical to rarely slightly wider than the hypanthium (0.2–0.4 cm long), hypanthium often with 2 longitudinal ridges, regularly to irregularly inflexed, anthers oblong, versatile, dorsifixed, dehiscent by longitudinal slits, style long and straight, stigma blunt, locules 3(4), the placentae each with 6 or more vertical rows of ovules. Flowers white.

**Fruit** sessile to shortly pedicellate (pedicels 0–0.1 cm long), cup-shaped to hemispherical to rarely truncate-globose, non-glaucous, 0.4–0.7 cm long, 0.6–0.7 cm wide, disc broad, level to sometimes slightly raised, valves 3(4), near rim level or slightly exerted.

**Seeds** brown to yellowish brown, 1.5–2.2 mm long, flattened-ovoid, dorsal surface shallowly reticulate, edge of seed smooth, hilum ventral.

**Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10):** cotyledons oblong-reniform, sometimes shallowly indented at the apex; stems square in cross-section; leaves always petiolate (petioles 0.5–1 cm), opposite for ca 8 or 9 nodes then alternate or persisting as opposite for 13+ nodes, ovate to broadly so, 3.2–7 cm long, 2–4.5 cm wide, base rounded to broadly tapering, dull, green, concolorous.

### Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in March and October.

### Notes

A small tree restricted to the stony rises and hills of the Kimberley region of Western Australia and the adjacent Northern Territory. There are two disjunct populations, one in the King Leopold Range area of the western Kimberley and another in the Lake Argyle area of the eastern Kimberley, with this population just extending over the border into the Northern Territory. Characterised by smooth powdery white bark, glossy green adult leaves and fruit with a broad flat or slightly ascending disc.

*Eucalyptus confluens* belongs in a group of species that are distinguished by having smooth bark, very dense reticulation in the adult leaves and flat, flattened-ovoid, non-toothed, pale yellow-brown to brown seeds with a ventral hilum. The other members of this group are *E. kenneallyi*, *E. umbrawarrensii*, *E. rupestris*, *E. leucophloia*, *E. brevifolia* and *E. ordiana*.

Within this group, *E. confluens* is closely related to *E. brevifolia*. Both have fruit with a broad flat to slightly ascending disc. They can be separated on the sheen of the adult leaf. *E. confluens* is glossy, while *E. brevifolia* is dull. Another species in this group with glossy green adult leaves is *E. umbrawarrensii* and it is easily separated from *E. confluens* by the disc of the fruit, which is narrow and descending in *E. umbrawarrensii* and broad and flat or slightly ascending in *E. confluens*. Likewise, *E. leucophloia*, *E. kenneallyi* and *E. rupestris* are also separated by their dull leaves and narrow descending disc. *E. ordiana* has broad, dull leaves in the mature crown (relatively narrow and



glossy in *E. confluens*).

Within its area of occurrence, *E. confluens* is the only white gum with glossy green adult leaves and fruit with a broad, flat to slightly ascending disc. However, if fruit is lacking, it may be confused with other closely related white gums of that area (i.e. *E. apodophylla*, *E. cupularis*, *E. gregoriensis*, *E. herbertiana*, *E. houseana*, *E. mooreana* and *E. pantoleuca*). *E. apodophylla* and *E. pantoleuca* are distinguished by having relatively large, opposite leaves in the mature crown (usually > 4 cm wide in *E. apodophylla* and *E. pantoleuca* but much smaller, usually narrower than 2.5 cm wide and alternate in *E. confluens*). *E. cupularis* is distinguished by having dull adult leaves and wider fruit, with prominently exerted valves (usually wider than 0.7 cm in *E. cupularis* and less than 0.7 cm in *E. confluens* and the valves near the rim of the fruit or slightly exerted). *E. gregoriensis* and *E. pantoleuca* are 3-budded in each umbel (*E. confluens* is 7-budded). *E. herbertiana* and *E. houseana* can be separated from *E. confluens* by the sheen of the adult leaves. *E. herbertiana* and *E. houseana* have dull leaves, while *E. confluens* is glossy. *E. mooreana* is easily distinguished by having sessile opposite leaves in the mature crown, always alternate and petiolate in *E. confluens*.

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### Origin of Name

*Eucalyptus confluens*: Latin *con*, with or together and *fluo*, to flow, most likely referring to the intramarginal vein. J.H. Maiden states in his *A Critical Revision of the Genus Eucalyptus* Vol. IV, parts 31–40 (1920) 174: "The description as given stands, but Mr. Fitzgerald handed me certain MSS. on his leaving for active service in April, 1916, and the following description, found amongst these papers, supplements the 1915 description somewhat".

In this description Fitzgerald wrote: "intramarginal one confluent with the edge".

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