

# *Eucalyptus cupularis*

## Halls Creek white gum

### Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Exsertaria | Subexsertae | Pyramidales

### Nomenclature

***Eucalyptus cupularis*** C.A.Gardner, J. & Proc. Roy. Soc. W. Australia 47: 60 (1964).

T: Halls Creek, Western Australia, 11 May 1951, C.A.Gardner 10217; holo: PERTH; iso: BRI, PERTH.

### Description

Small tree to ca 8 m tall, often of poor form. Forming a lignotuber.

**Bark** smooth and powdery throughout, new bark pale pink, maturing to white. Branchlets glaucous.

**Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm):** stems square in cross-section; juvenile leaves petiolate, alternate, ovate, 8–14 cm long, 4–8 cm wide, base rounded, blue-grey to glaucous.

**Adult leaves** alternate, petiole 1.5–3.5 cm; blade narrowly lanceolate to lanceolate, sometimes falcate 10–23 cm long, 0.9–2.7(3.5) cm wide, base tapering to the petiole, margin entire, apex pointed, concolorous, dull green to grey-green, side-veins acute or at a wider angle than 45° to the midrib, reticulation very dense, intramarginal vein present, oil glands obscure.

**Inflorescence** axillary unbranched, peduncles (0.7)1–2 cm long, buds per umbel 7, usually sessile, rarely shortly pedicellate (pedicels 0–0.3 cm long). **Mature buds** obovoid to diamond-shaped, 0.75–1.4 cm long, 0.4–0.9 cm wide, at times weakly angled basally, glaucous, scar present, operculum rounded to conical (0.5–0.6 cm long), sometimes shortly apiculate, stamens irregularly flexed or with some outer stamens erect and the inner ones inflexed, anthers oblong, versatile, dorsifixed, dehiscing by longitudinal slits, style long and straight, stigma blunt, locules usually 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 obconical, 0.5–1.2 cm long, 0.7–1.2 cm wide, usually glaucous, disc weakly raised to level, valves 4, strongly exserted.

**Seeds** brown, 1–1.7 mm long, ± obliquely pyramidal to cuboid, dorsal surface shallowly reticulate, ventral surface ribbed, edge of seed sharply toothed, hilum terminal.

**Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10):** cotyledons bilobed, stem square or rounded in cross-section, glaucous or non-glaucous; leaves always petiolate (petioles 0.5–0.8 cm), opposite for 4 to 9 nodes then alternate, ovate, 5.5–14 cm long, 1.3–7 cm wide, base tapering to the petiole, dull grey-green to glaucous.

### Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in October and November.

### Notes

A small tree from the Kimberley region of Western Australia, from the Bedford Downs – Bungle Bungle National Park region, south through Halls Creek to just crossing the border into the Gardner Range area of the northern Tanami region of the Northern Territory. It prefers growing on the foothills of low hills or on seasonally flooded, low lying areas or along drainage lines or watercourses. Characterised by the smooth white powdery bark, the glaucous branchlets, the distinctly petiolate, concolorous, dull green, lanceolate adult leaves and the relatively large glaucous buds and fruit, the fruit with prominently exserted valves.

*Eucalyptus cupularis* belongs to a small group of species closely related to the red gums. This group is distinguished by having smooth powdery bark, adult leaves with dense to very dense reticulation and intersectional or absent oil glands, buds with incurved or erect stamens, fruit with a weakly raised to annular disc and obliquely pyramidal, toothed seeds with a ± terminal hilum. Other members of this group are *E. mooreana*, *E. pantoleuca*, *E. herbertiana*, *E. glomericassiss* and *E. gregoriensis*.

Within this group, *E. cupularis* is closest to *E. herbertiana* and *E. gregoriensis*. It differs from both by having slightly larger buds and fruit (the fruit usually 0.7 cm or wider in *E. cupularis* and 0.6 cm or narrower in *E. herbertiana* and *E. gregoriensis*). It is distinguished further



from *E. herbertiana* by having glaucous branchlets, buds and fruit (*E. herbertiana* only rarely with slightly glaucous buds), and from *E. gregoriensis* by having seven-budded umbels and peduncles longer than 0.6 cm (*E. gregoriensis* normally with three-budded umbels and peduncles shorter than 0.5 cm). It is distinguished from *E. glomericassis* by having dull green to grey-green adult leaves and a relatively narrow disc on the fruit (*E. glomericassis* with glossy green adult leaves and a broad disc). It is easily distinguished from the other two members of the group, i.e. *E. mooreana* and *E. pantoleuca*, by its adult leaf shape and position. *E. cupularis* has petiolate, lanceolate, alternate adult leaves while *E. mooreana* has sessile, opposite, elliptical to ovate adult leaves and *E. pantoleuca* has petiolate,  $\pm$  opposite, orbicular to deltoid adult leaves. *E. pantoleuca* is further distinguished by having three-budded umbels.

Within its area of occurrence, *E. cupularis* may be confused with other related white gums; i.e. *E. alba* var. *australasica*, *E. apodophylla*, *E. bigalerita*, *E. brevifolia*, *E. confluens*, *E. houseana*, *E. ordiana* and *E. rupestris*.

*E. cupularis* differs from *E. alba* var. *australasica* by having glaucous branchlets, buds and fruit (the branchlets, buds and fruit in *E. alba* var. *australasica* not glaucous). *E. brevifolia* and *E. confluens* can be distinguished by having fruit with a broad flat disc and valves that are near the rim or only slightly exerted. (The fruit in *E. cupularis* has a disc that is annular and not broad and has prominently exerted valves.) *E. confluens* can be further separated by having glossy adult leaves (always dull in *E. cupularis*). *E. apodophylla* is distinguished by having opposite to sub-opposite, sessile to shortly petiolate adult leaves and fruit with the valves near the rim or only slightly exerted (*E. cupularis* with alternate, distinctly petiolate adult leaves and fruit with prominently exerted valves). *E. bigalerita* should not be confused with *E. cupularis* as it has large, deltoid to orbicular adult leaves and is, more often than not, with salmon-coloured smooth bark. *E. houseana* is distinguished by having smaller fruit, usually 0.5 cm or narrower and by having the valves of the fruit near the rim or slightly exerted (the fruit of *E. cupularis* is 0.7 cm or wider and the valves are prominently exerted). *E. ordiana* is separated by usually having glaucous to blue-grey, broad ovate to  $\pm$  deltoid leaves in the mature crown (*E. cupularis* with dull green to grey-green lanceolate leaves in the mature crown). *E. rupestris* has shorter,  $\pm$  ovate adult leaves, normally shorter than 8 cm, and small, cylindrical fruit, 0.4 cm or narrower, while *E. cupularis* has lanceolate adult leaves, normally longer than 10 cm, and cup-shaped fruit, normally 0.7 cm or wider.

## **MORE ABOUT RED GUMS AND OTHER ASSOCIATED GROUPS**

### Origin of Name

*Eucalyptus cupularis*: Latin *cupula*, a little cup, referring to the fruit shape.

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