

## *Eucalyptus diversifolia* subsp. *diversifolia*

### Soap mallee, Coastal white mallee

#### Classification

Eucalyptus | Eucalyptus | Longistylus | Frutices | Diversiformae | Neuropterae

#### Nomenclature

***Eucalyptus diversifolia*** Bonpl., *Descr. Pl. Malm.* 35, t. 13 (1814) subsp. ***diversifolia***.

T: cultivated at Jardin Botanique de Toulon, 1813, *C.Naudin s.n.*; ?syn: P; cultivated at Malmaison, Jan. 1809, *C.Naudin s.n.*; syn: P; cultivated at Jardin Noisette, Nov. 1812, *C.Naudin s.n.*; syn: P; cultivated at Malmaison, 1813, *C.Naudin s.n.*; syn: P.

*E. santalifolia* F.Muell., *Trans & Proc. Roy. Victorian Inst. Advancem. Sci.* 1: 35 (1854). T: Murray R., St Vincent & Spencer Gulfs, S.A., collector unknown; herbarium of cited specimen unknown to us.

*E. diversifolia* subsp. *megacarpa* Wright & Ladiges, *Aust. Sys. Bot.* 10: 678 (1997). T: Cape Nelson, Victoria. Roadside, Portland – Cape Nelson road, 300 m before state park entrance, Dec. 1994, IW 2; hol: MEL 2037230.

#### Description

**Mallee** to 6 m tall. Forming a lignotuber.

**Bark** smooth, predominantly cream and grey over pink, yellow or brown.

**Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm):** stem rounded in cross-section; juvenile leaves opposite for up to ca 15 nodes, sessile, amplexicaul to rounded, elliptic to ovate or oblong, 4–7.5 cm long, 1–2.5 cm wide, becoming alternate, petiolate, lanceolate, greyish green.

**Adult leaves** alternate, petiole 1.2–1.8 cm long; blade lanceolate to falcate (sometimes), 5.5–10 cm long, 1–2.2 cm wide, base usually tapering to petiole, concolorous, glossy, dark green, side-veins acute, moderately reticulate, intramarginal vein parallel to and remote from margin, oil glands mostly island or obscure.

**Inflorescence** axillary unbranched, peduncles 0.5–1.5 cm long, buds 7, 9 or 11 per umbel, pedicels 0.1–0.6 cm long. **Mature buds** diamond-shaped, 0.5–1.2 cm long, 0.4–0.7 cm wide, green to yellow, smooth, scurfy or slightly warty, scar absent, operculum conical to beaked, stamens irregularly flexed, anthers oblong to more or less cuboid, versatile, dorsifixed, dehiscent by longitudinal slits that usually are separate apically, style long, stigma tapered, locules 3 or 4, the placentae each with 2 vertical ovule rows. Flowers white.

**Fruit** sessile or pedicellate (pedicels 0–0.7 cm long), more or less cup-shaped, 0.5–1.1 cm long, 0.8–1.1(1.6) cm wide, disc level or slightly raised-convex, valves 3 or 4, near rim level.

**Seeds** brown to reddish brown, 2–3 mm long, pyramidal to D-shaped, dorsal surface smooth, hilum terminal.

**Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10):** cotyledons reniform; stems rounded in cross-section, smooth or slightly warty; leaves opposite, sessile and amplexicaul for at least 15 nodes, ovate to broadly lanceolate, 5.5–9 cm long, 2.5–5.5 cm long, at lower nodes the leaves are discolorous and slightly glossy green but become dull grey-green up the stem and more or less concolorous.

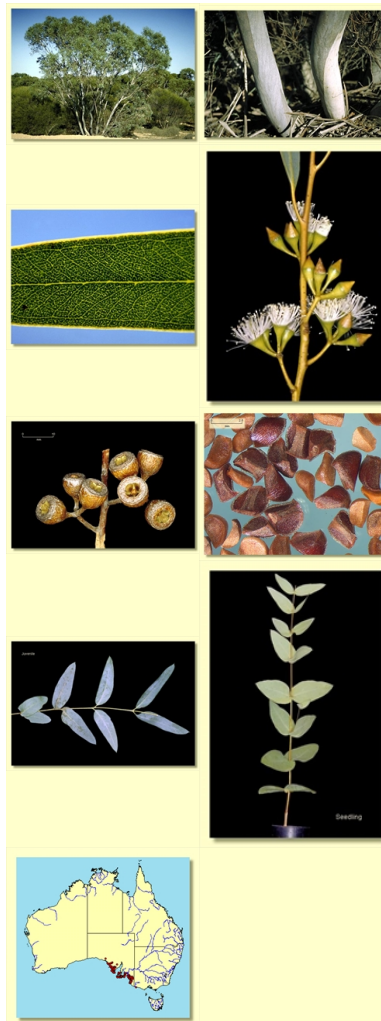
#### Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in January, May, June, July, August, September, October, November and December.

#### Notes

*Eucalyptus diversifolia* is a small to tall mallee species of coastal and subcoastal distribution from south-west of Caiguna in Western Australia east to Cape Nelson in far western Victoria, although absent from the southern Nullarbor area in far western South Australia.

It belongs in *Eucalyptus* subgenus *Eucalyptus* series *Diversiformae*, a group of mallee species characterised by adult leaves held ± erect, buds with a single operculum (hence no operculum scar), ± cuboid anthers that shed pollen by two separate slits, ovules arranged in two rows on the placenta, pyramidal seed and seedling and juvenile leaves opposite for many pairs.



There are two subspecies:

**E. diversifolia** subsp. **diversifolia**

Occurs from the Eyre Peninsula east to the lower Yorke Peninsula, Kangaroo Island and the lower south-east of South Australia as far as Beachport and, disjunctly, south of Portland, Victoria. It is a smooth-barked mallee with rhomboid buds and cupular fruit less than 1.2(1.6) cm diameter. Coastal forms may be shrubby while inland, e.g. central Eyre Peninsula, it is distinctive in its erect smooth stems.

**E. diversifolia** subsp. **hesperia**

Occurs west of the Nullarbor Plain on the limestone escarpment of the Hampton Tableland from its easterly seaward end near Eucla westwards to Madura, its furthest point inland, and south-west to meet the coast again south of Cocklebiddy continuing towards Point Culver. Plants found on exposed coastal sites are often shrubby to prostrate but always with a hint of rough bark at the base of the stems. Further inland they become tall mallees and have rough fibrous bark over at least the trunks, often extending to smaller branches. Fruits are usually smaller than in subsp. *diversifolia* but diameters to ca 1 cm do occur.

subsp. *megacarpa* is not recognised here. It is only weakly separated from the subsp. *diversifolia* on fruit size alone (diameter > 1.1 cm). Such large-fruited plants are found at Cape Nelson in Victoria and sporadically throughout the range of subsp. *diversifolia*, including on Kangaroo Island, and are here included in that subspecies.

*Eucalyptus diversifolia* is closely related to the Western Australian goldfields endemic species *E. platydisca* which differs most obviously in having dull blue-green adult foliage and arid rocky mountain habitat.

### Origin of Name

*Eucalyptus diversifolia*: Latin *diversi-*, diverse and *folium*, leaf, referring to the change of leaf form at different growth stages of the plant.

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