

Eucalyptus drummondii

Drummond's mallee

Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Bisectae | Destitutae | Curviptera | Xylocarpae

Nomenclature

Eucalyptus drummondii Benth., *Fl. Austral.* 3: 237 (1867).

E. oldfieldii var. *drummondii* (Benth.) Maiden, *Crit. Revis. Eucalyptus* 2: 223 (1912).

T: between Swan River and King George Sound, W.A., *J. Drummond* 2nd Coll. no. 86. ; lecto: K; isolecto: BM, CGE, E, NSW, W, *vide* J.H.Maiden, *Crit. Revis. Eucalyptus* 2: 223 (1912).

Description

Mallee to 4 m tall or sometimes a tree. Forming a lignotuber.

Bark smooth throughout, often powdery, whitish to grey and red-brown mottled.

Branchlets lacking oil glands in the pith.

Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm): stems rounded in cross-section; juvenile leaves always petiolate, alternate, ovate or orbicular becoming elliptical, 5.5–8 cm long, 1.8–5.5 cm wide, dull, green to slightly glaucous.

Adult leaves alternate, petioles 0.7–2.2 cm long; blade narrowly elliptical to oblong to ovate or lanceolate, (3.2)4–7(8) cm long, (0.8)1–2(2.7) cm wide, base tapering to petiole, margin entire, apex acute to rounded, dull, green to bluish green, side-veins greater than 45° to midrib, reticulation very dense, intramarginal vein close to margin, oil glands intersectional.

Inflorescence axillary unbranched, peduncles sometimes pendulous, 0.7–3 cm long, buds 7 per umbel, pedicellate (pedicels 0.2–1.2 cm long). **Mature buds** ovoid (0.8–1.8 cm long, 0.4–1 cm wide), rarely globular, sometimes glaucous, scar present, operculum broadly conical to rounded and apiculate, stamens all obliquely erect or the inner stamens variably inflexed, anthers cuboid, versatile, sub-basifixed, dehiscing by longitudinal slits, style long and straight, stigma blunt, locules 3 or 4, the placenta each with 4 vertical rows of ovules. Flowers white.

Fruit pedicellate (pedicels 0.3–1(1.3) cm long), hemispherical, 0.5–0.9(1.2) cm long, (0.8)1–1.2(1.4) cm wide, rim moderately narrow, disc broad and ascending or level, valves 3 or 4, strongly exserted.

Seeds brown, 1–3 mm long, flattened-ovoid or slightly angular, dorsal surface shallowly reticulate, hilum ventral.

Cultivated seedlings (measured at node 10): cotyledons Y-shaped (bisected); stems rounded in cross-section, young stems glaucous but wax soon lost; leaves always petiolate, opposite for 5 to 7 nodes then alternate, broadly ovate-elliptical or orbicular, 5.5–7 cm long, 1.8–5.5 cm wide, base tapering to rounded or truncate, apex pointed or rounded, dull, green to grey-green or developing leaves slightly glaucous.

Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in April, June, August, September, October, November and December.

Notes

A small mallee endemic to Western Australia, widespread north and south of Perth, from Eneabba and Wongan Hills south to Bridgetown and Woodanilling. The bark is smooth, usually white and powdery and the adult leaves are dull, light green to grey-green. It usually occurs on gravelly sites on granite or laterite.

Eucalyptus drummondii belongs in *Eucalyptus* subgenus *Symphyomyrtus* section *Bisectae* subsection *Destitutae* because buds have two opercula, cotyledons are Y-shaped and branchlets lack oil glands in the pith. Within this subsection *E. drummondii* is one of about 30 closely related species and subspecies that form series *Curviptera*, which is further characterised by having large buds in umbels of one, three or seven, staminal filaments erect or oblique (rarely inflexed) in bud, and large fruit with a usually ascending disc and exserted valves.

Eucalyptus drummondii is distinguished within series *Curviptera* by the combination of small elliptical leaves (less than 8 cm long), fruit less than 1.2 cm wide, ovoid buds in sevens and smooth powdery bark. Within its geographic range it is most likely to be confused with *E. lanepolei*, which commonly has longer, more falcate leaves and globular buds with inflexed stamens, and *E. annuliformis*, which has similar



leaves (to *E. drummondii*), larger buds and fruit with a flat disc. In the north-east of the geographic range of *E. drummondii* the related species *E. leptopoda* subsp. *arctata* occurs. This differs in having narrower crown leaves that lack an intramarginal vein, slightly smaller fruit and has white bark in season but is not powdery.

Note about *Eucalyptus graniticola* (unpublished name attributed to S.D. Hopper & M.I.H. Brooker, of which specimen Brooker 9807 is an example). This name has received some publicity in Western Australia in recent years. The name has been applied to a single plant in the wild, a mallee from near Wagerup, south of Perth. It grows on a granite slope, and DNA studies (Rossetto *et al.* 1996) have shown it to be a hybrid between *E. drummondii* and *E. rudis* subsp. *rudis*. *E. graniticola* Brooker & Hopper *ms* is listed as "Endangered" under the Australian Government *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)*. Further information may be found at this web address:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/sprat.pl>

Origin of Name

Eucalyptus drummondii : after James Drummond (1784–1863). James Drummond arrived in Perth in 1829 to take up an unpaid position as botanist, naturalist and superintendent of agricultural operations. For the first 10 years, he supported his wife and family on what he could earn from the sale of his botanical specimens. He was an energetic and painstaking collector and held in the highest esteem by his fellow botanists. Over 100 species have been named in his honour.

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