

## *Eucalyptus eremicola* subsp. *eremicola*

### Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Bisectae | Destitutae | Subulatae | Oleaginae

### Nomenclature

***Eucalyptus eremicola*** Boomsma subsp. ***eremicola***, *S. Austral. Naturalist* 50: 28 (1975)

T: South Australia:125 km E of Serpentine Lake, (28°30'S 130°22'E), 28 June 1967, *J. Johnson s.n.*; holotype: AD.

### Description

**Mallee** to 4 m tall. Forming a lignotuber.

**Bark** usually rough on the lower half of the stems, flaky to ribbony, grey to brown, smooth bark yellow-brown over powdery white or grey-white.

**Branchlets** lacking oil glands in the pith.

**Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm):** not seen.

**Adult leaves** alternate, petiole 0.7–1.7 cm long; blade linear to narrowly lanceolate, 4.5–10 cm long, 0.6–1.7 cm wide, base tapering to petiole, concolorous, glossy, green, side-veins acute, densely reticulate, intramarginal vein parallel to and just within margin, oil glands numerous and mostly intersectional.

**Inflorescence** axillary unbranched, peduncles 0.5–1 cm long, buds 9 to 15 per umbel, pedicels 0.2–0.3 cm long. **Mature buds** ovoid (0.6–0.8 cm long, 0.3–0.4 cm wide), scar present, operculum conical, stamens irregularly flexed, anthers adnate to weakly versatile, basifixed, globose, dehiscing by lateral pores, style long, stigma tapered, locules 3 or 4, the placentae each with 4 vertical ovule rows. Flowers white.

**Fruit** pedicellate (pedicels 0.1–0.3 cm long), truncate-globose, 0.3–0.6 cm long, 0.4–0.6 cm wide, disc descending, valves 3 or 4, valve tips strongly exerted due to fragile style remnants.

**Seeds** dull brown to grey, 1.2–2 mm long, ovoid or flattened-ovoid, occasionally with shallow longitudinal furrows on otherwise smooth dorsal surface, hilum ventral.



**Cultivated seedlings (measured at node 10):** cotyledons Y-shaped (bisected); stems appearing rounded to square in cross-section, but more or less five-sided; leaves opposite, sessile and linear for the first 2 to 3 nodes then alternate, subsessile to very shortly petiolate and becoming narrowly elliptical to narrowly lanceolate further up the stem, 2.5–6 cm long, 0.5–1 cm wide, dull grey-green.

### Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in January, July and September.

### Notes

*Eucalyptus eremicola* is a mallee species of the Great Victoria Desert of South Australia and Western Australia, extending north-west into the Little Sandy Desert and stretching in the west as far as the Sandstone and Leonora districts of the Goldfields of Western Australia. The bark is normally rough on the lower part of the stems. It has small buds with conical opercula and small fruit with the exerted style remnants usually persistent.

*Eucalyptus eremicola* 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. eremicola* is part of a large taxonomic series *Subulatae* further characterised by globose basifixed anthers, grey smooth seeds with shallow longitudinal furrows, and fruit with persistent exerted style remnants. Series *Subulatae* is divided principally into four subseries based on the juvenile leaves, one with spiral, crowded seedling phyllotaxis (subseries *Spirales*), another with decussate and decurrent seedling leaves (subseries *Decurrentes*), another with decussate non-decurrent seedling leaves (subseries *Decussatae*), and a fourth to which *E. eremicola* belongs with disjunct, petiolate seedling leaves (subseries *Oleaginae*).

The other members of the subseries *Oleaginae* are *E. kochii*, *E. longissima* and *E. ultima*. Within the subseries, *E. kochii* and *E. longissima* differ by having rough bark over most of the stem. *E. longissima* differs further by normally being a much larger plant. *E. ultima* is mostly smooth-barked (sometimes with rough bark for ca 0.5 m) and has very narrow linear seedling leaves.

Within its area of occurrence, *E. eremicola* should only be confused with *E. socialis*. *E. socialis* has bigger buds and fruit, the buds

normally with a long beaked operculum.

There are two subspecies:

**E. eremicola** subsp. **eremicola**

Common in the red sands of the Great Victoria Desert. It is distinguished from subsp. *peeneri* by its narrow, very glossy green adult leaves.

**E. eremicola** subsp. **peeneri**

A mallee from the Great Victoria Desert of South Australia and Western Australia, extending west to the Meekathara region of Western Australia. It is often of sprawling habit with stems usually rough on the lower half. The adult leaves are usually dull, blue-green to blue-grey, but can mature to semi-glossy blue-green, particularly in the western populations where it grows slightly taller than it does in the Great Victoria Desert. This western form was formerly described as *E. subglucida*.

Intergrades between both subspecies are common in parts of the Great Victoria Desert.

### Origin of Name

*Eucalyptus eremicola*: Greek *eremi-*, desert and Latin *cola*, dweller.

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