

Eucalyptus fraseri subsp. *melanobasis*

Fraser Range blackbutt

Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Dumaria | Rufispermae

Nomenclature

Eucalyptus fraseri subsp. **melanobasis** L.A.S.Johnson & K.D.Hill, *Telopea* 9: 298 (2001).



T: Western Australia: Fraser Range, 87.7 km W of Balladonia roadhouse on Highway 1 (32°01'S, 122°49'E [here corrected]), 14 Nov. 1983, *K.D.Hill 701 & D.F.Blaxell*; holo: NSW; iso: CANB, K, PERTH.

Description

Trees to 15 m tall. Non-lignotuberous.

Bark rough for basal 1–3 m of trunk with friable surface but black and much hardened beneath, smooth above, grey to creamy white over orange shedding in long ribbons.

Branchlets with oil glands in pith.

Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm): stems square to rounded in cross-section; juvenile leaves always petiolate, alternate, deltoid to ovate, 7–10.5 cm long, 3.5–6.5 cm wide, base truncate to rounded, dull, bluish-green.

Adult leaves thick, leathery, alternate, petioles 1.5–4 cm long; blade lanceolate or falcate, 9.5–17(25) cm long, 1.3–4 cm wide, base tapering to petiole, margin entire, apex pointed, concolorous, green, glossy, side-veins at an acute or wider angle to midrib, reticulation dense to very dense, intramarginal vein close to margin, numerous irregular intersectional oil glands.

Inflorescence axillary unbranched, peduncles stout, 0.2–1 cm long, buds ?7 or 9 per umbel, shortly and stoutly pedicellate or sessile (pedicels 0–0.4 cm long). **Mature buds** ovoid (1.4–1.6 cm long, 0.6–0.7 cm wide), scar present, operculum conical and often radially striate (0.7–0.8 cm long), stamens inflexed, anthers cuboid to wedge-shaped, versatile, sub-basifixed, dehiscing by longitudinal slits, style long, straight, stigma more or less rounded, locules 4, the placentae each with 4 vertical rows of ovules. Flowers white.

Fruit pedicellate or sessile (pedicels 0–0.3 cm long), slightly elongated-cupular, 0.7–0.9 cm long, 0.7–1.2 cm wide, with 2 to many shallow longitudinal striations, disc descending obliquely, valves 4, near rim level.

Seeds reddish brown and glossy, 0.6–3 mm long, flattened-ovoid and slightly angular, dorsal surface often lacunose, scarcely reticulate, hilum ventral.

Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10): cotyledons reniform; stems square in cross-section or slightly winged, warty or smooth; leaves always petiolate, opposite for 3 or 4 nodes then alternate, deltoid to ovate, 5.5–9 cm long, 3–5.5 cm wide, dull, grey-green to green.

Flowering Time

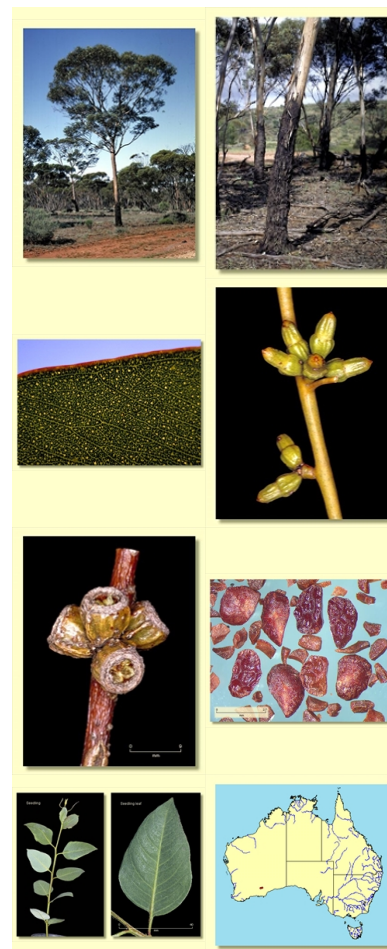
Flowering time unknown.

Notes

Eucalyptus fraseri is a small to medium-sized tree (mallet) species with coarse-leaved glossy green crown, endemic to arid south-eastern Western Australia from the Fraser Range extending to the east and south of Balladonia.

In the classification of Brooker (2000) *Eucalyptus fraseri* belongs in *Eucalyptus* subgenus *Symphyomyrtus* section *Dumaria* having these features: buds initially with two opercula the outer shed early, stamens strongly inflexed, ovules in 4 rows on the placentae and cotyledons reniform. Within section *Dumaria* the species belongs to a large sub-group of closely related species (series *Rufispermae*, 37 described species and subspecies) diagnosed by glandular pith in the branchlets, anthers cuboid to wedge-shaped, versatile, and by the reddish brown and glossy, flattish seeds which are unique to the series.

E. fraseri is a prominent, erect tree with relatively large buds and fruit, and juvenile leaves which are large, deltoid, and slightly glaucous. It is closest to the recently described *E. valens* from near Scadden south-west of the distribution of *E. fraseri* and which differs by having



completely sessile buds and fruits and a more squat operculum. To the east of the distribution of *E. fraseri*, the related *E. calcareana* is found, extending well into South Australia, and differs from *E. fraseri* by the smaller stature, and smaller buds and fruits, and by having a lignotuber. The mallet *E. georgei* subsp. *georgei* grows with *E. fraseri* and is distinguished from the latter by dull slightly glaucous adult leaves, glaucous branchlets, buds and fruit.

There are two subspecies:

E. fraseri subsp. **fraseri**

A graceful white-barked tree growing in the dry country from the eastern slopes of Fraser Range to Balladonia and to the south thereof on sandy red loams.

E. fraseri subsp. **melanobasis**

This is a localized tree with a distinct rough black lower trunk; restricted to the upper parts of the Fraser Range, but the limits of its distribution away from highway 1 are not clear.

Origin of Name

Eucalyptus fraseri: after Sir Malcolm Fraser (1834–1900). Malcolm Fraser was Surveyor-General of Western Australia, then Colonial Secretary and later that State's first Agent-General in London in 1890.

subsp. *melanobasis*: Greek *melano-*, black and *basis*, base, referring to the rough basal bark.

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