

Eucalyptus infera

Durikai mallee

Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Exsertaria | Erythroxylon

Nomenclature

Eucalyptus infera A.R.Bean, *Austrobaileya* 3 (2) 291 (1990).

T: Queensland: Darling Downs District: southern end of State Forest Reserve 444, south-west of Warwick, 28° 24' S, 151° 42' E, 4 October 1988, A.R.Bean 936; holotype: BRI; isotype: CANB, MEL, NSW. (the CANB specimen not received).

Eucalyptus dealbata var. *populnea* Blakely, *Key to the Eucalypts* (1934). T: Queensland, Darling Downs District, Inglewood, October 1922, C.J.Smith, holotype: NSW; isotype: BRI.

Description

Mallee or rarely a small tree to 8 m tall. Forming a lignotuber.

Bark smooth throughout, shiny, grey to coppery to olive-green.

Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm): stem square or rounded in cross-section; juvenile leaves petiolate, alternate, ovate to orbicular, 4–7 cm long, 4–7 cm wide, glossy green, base tapering to the petiole, apex emarginate, margin often with shallow crenulations.

Adult leaves alternate, petiole 1.2–3 cm long; blade broadly lanceolate to elliptical to ovate, 6–11 cm long, 1.7–4(5) cm wide, apex acute, base tapering to petiole, margin often with shallow crenulations, concolorous, glossy green, moderately reticulate, intramarginal vein parallel to and well removed from the margin, oil glands numerous and island. Plants are frequently reproductive with a sub-adult crown of more elliptical rather than lanceolate leaves.

Inflorescence axillary unbranched, peduncles 0.8–1.5 cm long, buds 9–18 per umbel, pedicellate (pedicels 0.3–0.5 cm long). **Mature buds** elongated ovoid with operculum much longer than hypanthium (buds 1–1.3 cm long, 0.3–0.4 cm wide), yellow or creamy, smooth, scar present, operculum horn-shaped (0.8–1.1 cm long), stamens erect, anthers cuboid to oblong, versatile, dorsifixed, dehiscent by longitudinal slits (non-confluent), style long, stigma tapered, locules 3 or 4, the placentae each with 6–8 vertical ovule rows. Flowers white.

Fruit pedicellate (pedicels 0.1–0.4 cm long), hemispherical, 0.3 cm long, 0.4–0.8 cm wide, disc raised, raised disc convex to concave, sometimes oblique or vertical, valves 3 or 4, strongly exserted.

Seeds dark brown, 0.8–1 mm long, pyramidal or ± cuboid, dorsal surface smooth, hilum terminal.

Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10): cotyledons bilobed; stems square in cross-section with small wings on the edges; leaves always petiolate, opposite for the first 3 to 5 nodes then becoming alternate, ovate, 5–8 cm long, 4–7 cm wide, base tapering to rounded, apex bluntly pointed to rounded, sometimes shallowly emarginate, green.

Flowering Time

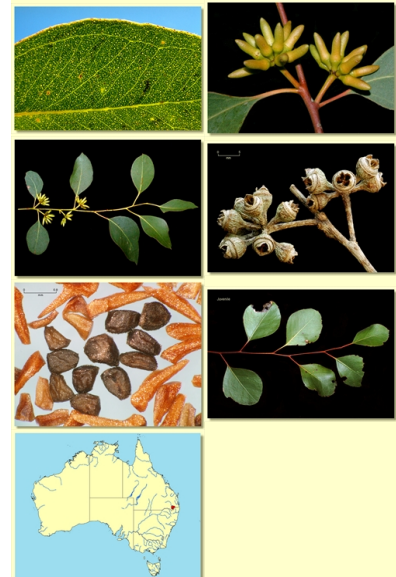
Flowering time unknown.

Notes

A mallee restricted to a small area in Queensland, just south-west of Warwick. *E. infera* is an odd eucalypt with the buds, fruit and seed showing strong affinities to the red gums (series *Exsertae*), with the buds having the long narrow horn-shaped operculum and the hemispherical fruit with the raised disc and prominently exserted valves. The juveniles and adult leaves, however, show some similarity to those of the swamp gums (series *Foveolatae*), with the adult leaves broadly lanceolate to ovate and the intramarginal vein well removed from the margin, and juvenile leaves orbicular to ovate. The juvenile leaves have the apex often emarginate and the margins often shallowly crenulate.

In the classification of Brooker (2000) *Eucalyptus infera* is placed in *Eucalyptus* subgenus *Symphyomyrtus* section *Exsertaria* (red gums) series *Erythroxylon* because the buds have two opercula, ovules are in six rows, seeds are pyramidal to cuboid and blackish, cotyledons are reniform to oblong, adult leaves are concolorous and the fruit have exserted valves. Series *Erythroxylon* has fifteen species which occur throughout eastern and central Australia: *E. amplifolia*, *E. blakelyi*, *E. chloroclada*, *E. dealbata*, *E. dwyeri*, *E. flindersii*, *E. gilleni*, *E. glaucina*, *E. infera*, *E. kabiana*, *E. nandewarica*, *E. nudicaulis*, *E. tereticornis*, *E. terrica* and *E. vicina*.

In the original description it was suggested that the similarity of the juvenile leaves with those of the swamp gums indicates some affinity of



E. infera with series *Foveolatae*. The authors of EUCLID believe the resemblance is incidental and not an indication of natural affinity between the red gums and the swamp gums.

With its non-glaucous buds and long narrow operculum, *E. infera* could only be confused with *E. blakelyi*, *E. tereticornis*, *E. kabiana* and *E. amplifolia* and is easily distinguished by its dull green juvenile leaves which are also ovate, with shallowly crenulate margins and emarginate apexes, but broadly ovate to orbicular and glossy green in *E. amplifolia*, dull green and ovate in *E. blakelyi* and *E. tereticornis* and lanceolate in *E. kabiana*, with all four species having juvenile leaves with entire margins and acute apices.

Eucalyptus infera is listed as "Vulnerable" 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>

MORE ABOUT RED GUMS AND OTHER ASSOCIATED GROUPS

Origin of Name

Eucalyptus infera: Latin *inferus* - inferior, referring to the fact that this species grows as an understorey to other eucalypts.

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