

Eucalyptus macrocarpa subsp. *macrocarpa*

Mottlecah

Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Bisectae | Destitutae | Curviptera | Xylocarpae

Nomenclature

Eucalyptus macrocarpa Hook., *Icon. Pl.* 5: t. 405, 406, 407 (1842) subsp. **macrocarpa**.

T: Swan R. Colony, W.A., *J.Drummond* 13; holo: K.

Description

Mallee to 3 m tall. Forming a lignotuber.

Bark smooth throughout, shiny yellowish brown and grey-brown, shedding in short ribbons.

Branchlets glaucous; lacking oil glands in the pith.

Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm): stems square or rounded in cross-section, glaucous.

Crown formed of **juvenile** leaves which are typically opposite, sessile, amplexicaul, cordate to oblong, 7–13.5 cm long, 3.5–8.5 cm wide, margin entire, rarely subcrenulate, apex usually rounded to acute, rarely emarginate, concolorous, dull, pale whitish grey due to copious surface wax, side-veins greater than 45° to midrib, densely reticulate, intramarginal vein remote from margin, oil glands moderately numerous, intersectional.

Inflorescence axillary unbranched, peduncles (0.1)0.3–1 cm long; bud solitary, sessile or subsessile. **Mature buds** ovoid (4.4–5.3 cm long, 2.5–4 cm wide), glaucous, finely ribbed longitudinally to smooth, scar present, operculum beaked (3–4.3 cm long), outer stamens

oblique, some inner stamens inflexed, filaments red, anthers cuboid, yellow, dorsifixed, dehiscing by longitudinal slits, style long and more or less straight, stigma blunt, locules 4 or 5, the placentae each with 8 or 10 vertical rows of ovules, with a narrow central gap. Flowers red.

Fruit sessile, broadly and shallowly obconical, 1.8–2.6 cm long, 4.8–6.5 cm wide, disc slightly to steeply raised, oblique, valves 4 or 5, exerted.

Seeds pale straw-brown to pale grey-brown, 3–6 mm long, more or less pyramidal with prominent ridges and a conspicuous encircling marginal flange ca 1 mm wide, dorsal surface smooth to shallowly reticulate, hilum terminal.

Cultivated seedlings (measured at node 10): cotyledons Y-shaped (bisected); stems rounded to square in cross-section, glaucous; leaves opposite, sessile, orbicular to cordate, 4–5.5 cm long, 3.8–4.5 cm wide, base amplexicaul to truncate, margin entire to subcrenulate, apex pointed, glaucous.

Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in October.

E. macrocarpa is a favourite ornamental particularly in household gardens as it has spectacular flowers and is a low-growing bush.

Notes

Eucalyptus macrocarpa is a dense, often sprawling mallee species endemic to Western Australia, from Coorow in the north, east and south-east of Perth to about Kulin, usually on sand plain. The stems are smooth and the crown consists only of juvenile leaves which are large, sessile, glaucous.

Eucalyptus macrocarpa 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. macrocarpa* is in series *Curviptera*, one of about 30 closely related species and subspecies which are 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 usually with an ascending disc and exerted valves. Several of these species are noted for their large-leaved crowns made up of juvenile leaves.

E. macrocarpa is distinguished from the closely related single-budded species *E. rhodantha* and *E. impensa*, both of which occur on sand in the wheatbelt north of Perth, by the combination of sessile glaucous crown leaves, non-pedicellate buds (though a peduncle of <1 cm long may be present). *E. impensa* always has large petiolate non-glaucous crown leaves and buds on short pedicels and stout peduncles to 2 cm long. *E. rhodantha* usually has sessile glaucous crown leaves (occasionally a few petiolate leaves are also formed) and stoutly pedicellate



buds on peduncles to ca 3 cm long. Flowers of *E. rhodantha* and *E. macrocarpa* are red or rarely creamy white, whilst those of *E. impensa* are pink.

There are two subspecies:

E. macrocarpa subsp. **macrocarpa**

This is the more widespread subspecies, occurring from near Coorow in the north to Wagin and Kulin in the south. Subsp. *macrocarpa* has generally larger leaves (7-13.5 cm long) and wider fruit (> 4.7 cm wide) than subsp. *elachantha*.

E. macrocarpa subsp. **elachantha**

This is of restricted occurrence from south-east of Geraldton to Walyering and differs by the fruit which are less than or equal to 4.5 cm wide and crown leaves which are 5.5-8.5 cm long.

Origin of Name

Eucalyptus macrocarpa: Greek *macro-*, large, long and *carpos*, fruit.

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