

# *Eucalyptus major*

## Grey gum

### Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Latoangulatae | Lepidotae-Fimbriatae

### Nomenclature

**Eucalyptus major** (Maiden) Blakely, *Key Eucalypts* 100 (1934).

*E. propinqua* var. *major* Maiden, *Crit. Revis. Eucalyptus* 6: 504, t. 241 (1923). T: Norman Creek near Brisbane, Qld. May 1917, C.T.White s.n.; holo: NSW; iso: BRI.

### Description

**Tree** to 20 m tall. Forming a lignotuber.

**Bark** smooth, becoming granular with age, mottled grey, cream, pink, orange, shedding in strips.

**Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm):** stem square to round in cross-section; juvenile leaves always petiolate, opposite for 4 to 6 nodes then alternate, ovate, 7.5–10 cm long, 2.5–4 cm wide, discolorous, base rounded or tapering to petiole, green.

**Adult** leaves alternate, petiole 1.5–3 cm long; blade lanceolate to falcate, 9–20 cm long, (1.5)2–4(5) cm wide, base tapering to petiole, discolorous, glossy or dull, darker green above, paler below, strongly penniveined, densely to very densely reticulate, intramarginal vein parallel to and just within margin, oil glands mostly island.

**Inflorescence** usually axillary unbranched, peduncles 0.7–1.5 cm long, flattened, buds 7, shortly pedicellate to sometimes sessile (pedicels 0–0.5). **Mature buds** ovoid to diamond-shaped ((0.5)0.6–0.9(1.1) cm long, 0.4–0.5 cm wide), sometimes with slight longitudinal ribs on hypanthium, scar present, operculum conical to slightly beaked, stamens inflexed, anthers cuboid, versatile, dorsifixed, dehiscing by longitudinal slits (non-confluent), style long, stigma tapered, locules 3 or 4, the placentae each with 4 vertical ovule rows. Flowers white.

**Fruit** sessile or pedicellate (pedicels 0–0.5 cm long), obconical to cup-shaped, 0.3–0.5 cm long, 0.45–0.8 cm wide, sometimes faintly ribbed longitudinally, disc raised-convex to annular or level, valves 3 or 4, strongly exerted.

**Seeds** brown, 1–1.2 mm long, obliquely pyramidal to cuboid, more or less angular, dorsal surface smooth or shallowly pitted, hilum ± terminal.

**Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10):** cotyledons oblong; stems square in cross-section; leaves always petiolate, opposite for ca 5 nodes then alternate, broadly lanceolate to ovate, 8–15 cm long, 2.5–6 cm wide, base tapering to rounded, margin entire, apex pointed, darker green above, paler beneath.

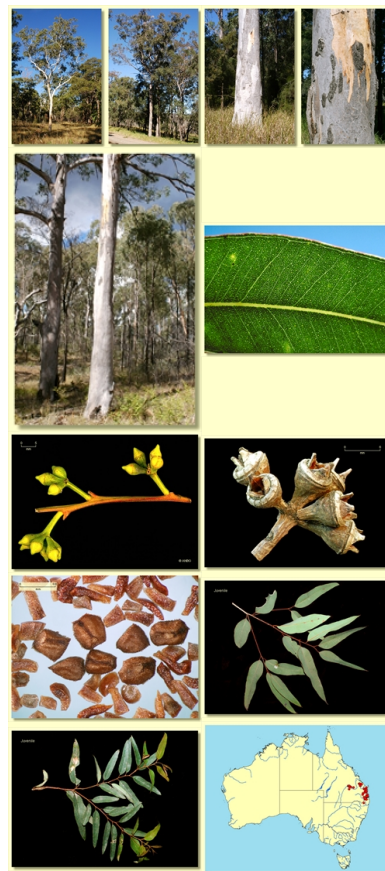
### Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in November.

### Notes

A medium-sized to tall tree endemic to the coastal, subcoastal and central ranges of south-east Queensland from the Blackdown Tablelands, Kroombit Tops, Miriam Vale, Carnarvon Ranges area, south through the Murgon, Gympie, Nambour area, as far south as the suburbs of Brisbane (e.g. Mt Coot-tha, Norman Park, Seven Hills Nature Reserve). *Eucalyptus major* is characterized by its dull granular smooth mature bark, its strongly discolorous adult leaves paler on the underside and with widely spreading side-veins and dense to very dense reticulation, and its small buds and fruit.

*Eucalyptus major* belongs in *Eucalyptus* subgenus *Symphyomyrtus* section *Latoangulatae* because cotyledons are bilobed, leaves are discolorous and have side-veins at a wide angle to the midrib, buds have two opercula and fruit have exerted valves. Within this section, it is one of six species forming series *Lepidotae-Fimbriatae* (the Grey gums) with ovules in 4(6) rows and the bark smooth throughout becoming granular with age. The series *Lepidotae-Fimbriatae* can be informally divided further into two groups based on seed colour and the presence or absence of small teeth on the seed edge. *E. punctata*, *E. canaliculata*, *E. longirostrata* and *E. grisea* all have black seed that are prominently toothed along the edges. *E. propinqua* and *E. major* have brown to light brown seed that have a much smoother surface texture than those of the other grey gums mentioned above, lacking the prominent teeth on the seed edge. Also the bark of *E. propinqua* and *E. major* tends to shed in strips rather than patches like the other grey gums.



*E. major* is very closely related to *E. propinqua* and may be better placed, where it was originally described by Maiden, as a subspecies of *E. propinqua*. It differs only marginally by having coarser leaves and slightly larger buds and fruit with shorter pedicels. Buds and fruit are sometimes almost sessile in *E. major* and usually distinctly pedicellate in *E. propinqua*.

*E. major* is distinguished from the other grey gums by its small buds and fruits and by its brown, relatively smooth seeds (black, prominently ribbed and toothed for the other grey-gums).

Within its area of occurrence, *E. major* may be confused with some red gums (e.g. *E. tereticornis*). The red gums, which can sometimes have the dull granular-type bark of the grey gums, are easily distinguished by having concolorous adult leaves with moderate reticulation.

### Origin of Name

*Eucalyptus major*: Latin *majus* - greater, referring to the coarser leaves, buds and fruit than those of *E. propinqua*.

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