

Eucalyptus morrisii

Grey mallee

Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Exsertaria | Phaeoxylon

Nomenclature

Eucalyptus morrisii R.T.Baker, *Proc. Linn. Soc. New South Wales* 25: 312 (1900).

T: New South Wales: Girilambone, *W. Baeuerlen s.n.*, December 1899; Lectotype (NSW310761); *vide* Bean, A.R., *Telopea* 12(4): 473 (2010).

Description

Tree or mallee to 4 m tall. Forming a lignotuber.

Bark of trees often rough to smaller branches, in mallees often only at base of stems; rough bark usually compacted, or fibrous or box-type, dark grey; smooth bark grey to green-grey, sometimes with a few ribbons in crown.

Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm): stems usually square in cross-section; juvenile leaves shortly petiolate, opposite for 2–6 nodes then alternate, narrowly lanceolate to linear, 6–15 cm long, 0.5–2 cm wide, dull, green to grey-green.

Adult leaves alternate, petiole 0.7–2 cm long; blade lanceolate, 5.5–14.5 cm long, 0.8–2.1 cm wide, base tapering to petiole, concolorous, dull, grey-green, side-veins greater than 45° to midrib, moderately reticulate, intramarginal vein parallel to and just within margin, oil glands island.

Inflorescence axillary unbranched, peduncles 0.5–1.3 cm long, buds 3 (rarely with a few in 7s), pedicellate (pedicels 0.2–0.3 cm long). **Mature buds** ovoid (0.8–0.9 cm long, 0.5 cm wide), yellow or creamy, scar present, operculum conical (0.5–0.7 cm long), stamens erect or irregularly flexed, anthers cuboid to oblong, versatile, dorsifixed, dehiscing by longitudinal slits (non-confluent), style long, stigma blunt, locules 4 to 6 each with 6 vertical ovule rows on the placenta. Flowers white.

Fruit sessile or pedicellate (pedicels 0–0.3 cm long), hemispherical or obconical, 0.3–0.6 cm long, 0.7–1.2 cm wide, disc raised-convex or oblique, valves 4–6, strongly exserted.

Seeds dark brown to black, 1–1.6 mm long, pyramidal or cuboid, dorsal surface usually pitted, hilum terminal.

Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10): cotyledons reniform to oblong; stems square to rounded in cross-section; leaves always petiolate, opposite for 3–6 nodes then becoming alternate, narrowly lanceolate to linear, 6–15 cm long, 0.4–2.3 cm wide, base tapering, apex pointed, dull, green to grey-green.

Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in December.

Notes

A mallee or rarely small tree scattered on rocky hills east of the Darling River in the Bourke–Cobar–Nyngan–Yathong area of north-western New South Wales. *E. morrisii* is distinguished by the extensive rough compacted or fibrous bark, linear juvenile leaves and three-budded inflorescences.

Eucalyptus morrisii belongs to a group of red gums that is distinguished by having rough bark, buds with the stamens mostly erect, fruit where the disc is united to the ovary roof and by the dark brown to black, toothed, cuboid to pyramidal single-coated seed. This group has six taxa occurring from central New South Wales north to New Guinea: *E. brassiana*, *E. lockyeri* subsp. *lockyeri*, *E. lockyeri* subsp. *exuta*, *E. ammophila*, *E. exserta* and *E. morrisii*. Within this group *E. morrisii* is the only species with three-budded inflorescences.

E. morrisii has been confused with *E. flindersii*, a 3 or 7-budded red gum endemic to South Australia, occurring mainly on slopes and summits of peaks in the Northern Flinders Ranges and also at Devil's Peak south-west of Quorn and Pualco Hill south of Yunta. *E. flindersii* is nearly always smooth-barked, with some of the larger plants having accumulated rough bark near the base. (*E. morrisii* is rough-barked on at least the trunk.)



MORE ABOUT RED GUMS AND OTHER ASSOCIATED GROUPS

Origin of Name

Eucalyptus morrisii: after Robert Newton Morris (1844–1921). Morris trained to be a Congregational Church Minister, but devoted most of his life to education. He was Principal of the Camden College and later purchased the Yass Grammar School and established the Goulburn Grammar School. From 1885 to 1890 he was Inspector of Schools for the New South Wales Government and from 1896 to 1901 was Superintendent of Technical Education. When R.T. Baker described *E. morrisii* he acknowledged Dr Morris's interest and cooperation in the study of the genus.

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