

Eucalyptus ovata subsp. *ovata*

Swamp gum, Black gum

Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Maidenaria | Triangulares | Foveolatae

Nomenclature

Eucalyptus ovata Labill., *Nov. Holl. Pl.* 2: 13, t. 153 (1806) subsp. ***ovata***.

Eucalyptus gunnii var. *ovata* (Labill.) H.Deane & Maiden, *Proc. Linn. Soc. New South Wales* ser. 2, 26: 136 (1901), *nom. illeg.* T: Van Diemens Land [Tas.], *J.Labillardière s.n.*

Eucalyptus stuartiana F.Muell., ex Miq., *Ned. Kruidk. Arch* 4: 131 (1856) *p.p.* T: Tasmania, *C.Stuart, s.n.*

Eucalyptus muelleri Naudin, *Rev. Hort.* 406 (1855). T: not designated.

Eucalyptus paludosa R.T.Baker, *Proc. Linn. Soc. New South Wales* 23: 167 (1898); *E. stuartiana* var. *longifolia* Benth., *Fl. Austral.* 3: 244 (1867). T: locality unknown, *W.Woolfs s.n.*; syn: Twofold Bay, NSW, *F.Mueller s.n.*; syn: K; isosyn: NSW; Twofold Bay, NSW, *A.Oldfield s.n.*; syn: K.

Eucalyptus gunnii var. *acervula* H.Deane & Maiden, *Proc. Linn. Soc. New South Wales* ser. 2, 26: 136 (1901). T: near Plenty Ra., Vic., *F.Mueller s.n.*

Description

Tree to 20 m tall. Forming a lignotuber.

Bark smooth throughout or with loose, rough, grey to grey-brown bark to variable height on trunk; smooth bark white, cream, pale grey or pink-brown, occasionally powdery.

Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm): stem rounded in cross-section; juvenile leaves subsessile at first but soon petiolate, opposite for ca 5–10 pairs then alternate, elliptical to ovate, 3–8.5 cm long, 2.5–6 cm wide, margin crenulate or entire, earliest leaves with lobed or rounded base, later leaves tapering, slightly discolourous, green.

Adult leaves alternate, petiole 1.5–3.3 cm long; blade lanceolate to ovate, 8–18 cm long, 1.6–5 cm wide, usually undulate, base tapering to petiole, concolorous, glossy, green, side-veins greater than 45° to midrib, densely to very densely reticulate, intramarginal vein parallel to and well removed from margin, oil glands usually absent.

Inflorescence axillary unbranched, peduncles 0.3–1.4 cm long, buds 7, normally pedicellate, rarely sessile, pedicels (0)0.2–0.4(0.7) cm long. **Mature buds** diamond-shaped (0.5–0.9 cm long, 0.4–0.6 cm wide), green, scar present (outer operculum shed early), operculum usually conical, rounded in some coastal forms, rarely beaked, (0.3–0.5 cm long), stamens inflexed, anthers cuneate or cuboid, versatile, dorsifixed, dehiscing by longitudinal slits (non-confluent), style long, stigma blunt, locules 3 or 4, the placentae each with 4 vertical ovule rows. Flowers white.

Fruit sessile or pedicellate, pedicels (0)0.1–0.5 cm long, obconical or slightly campanulate, 0.3–0.8 cm long, 0.4–0.8 cm wide, disc raised-annular, or level, valves 3 or 4, exerted or near rim level.

Seeds brown or grey, 1–2 mm long, ovoid or flattened-ovoid, often pointed at one end, usually lacunose, dorsal surface shallowly pitted, hilum ventral.

Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10): cotyledons bilobed; stems usually rounded to square in cross-section; leaves shortly petiolate, opposite for 5–7 nodes then alternate, ovate-elliptic, 4–10 cm long, 2.5–4.5 cm wide, base rounded to tapering, margin entire or subcrenulate, apex blunt, slightly discolourous, dull, mid-green above, paler below.

Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in March, June, July, August, October and November.

Notes

Eucalyptus ovata is a small to medium-sized tree species widespread from Kangaroo Island, the Mt Lofty Range, Fleurieu Peninsula and south-east in South Australia, eastern Tasmania, southern Victoria and the South Coast, Southern Tablelands and South-west slopes of New



South Wales north almost to Oberon.

A swamp gum, usually mostly smooth-barked but often with conspicuous, basal, unshed dead bark, *E. ovata* is recognised by undulate, glossy green leaves and the rhomboidal (diamond-shaped) buds and obconical fruit (funnel-shaped). It is related to *E. yarraensis* which differs in the consistent rough bark over the whole trunk and often branches and smaller buds and fruits, and to *E. brookeriana* which has a stocking of rough bark, discolourous glandular leaves, round to oblong, crenulate, glandular juvenile leaves and fruit which may vary from obconical to cupular. It occupies wet, well-drained fertile sites in contrast to *E. ovata* which prefers areas of poor drainage or swamps. *E. strzeleckii* differs from *E. ovata* most strikingly in having glaucous new tip growth.

There are two subspecies:

E. ovata* subsp. *ovata

The widespread subsp. *ovata* has no visible oil glands in the adult leaves. Fruit dimensions 0.3–0.8 cm long, 0.4–0.8 cm wide, they tend to be smaller than those of subsp. *grandiflora* but there is some overlap.

E. ovata* subsp. *grandiflora

The more restricted subsp. *grandiflora* has larger buds and fruits, and prominent oil glands in the adult leaves. It is restricted to the Mount Gambier – Naracoorte – Portland area of South Australia and Victoria. Fruit dimensions 0.6–1 cm long, 0.6–1.3 cm wide.

Eucalyptus ovata belongs in *Eucalyptus* subgenus *Symphyomyrtus* section *Maidenaria* because the cotyledons are bilobed, inflorescences axillary, anthers versatile and seeds flattened-ovoid. Within this large section, *E. ovata* is one of ten species forming subsection *Triangulares* series *Foveolatae*. The species are *E. barberi* and *E. rodwayi* (both Tasmanian endemics), *E. brookeriana*, *E. ovata* (both occurring in Tasmania and on the mainland) and *E. aggregata*, *E. cadens*, *E. camphora*, *E. macarthurii*, *E. strzeleckii* and *E. yarraensis* (found only on the mainland). *Eucalyptus ovata* is closest to *E. brookeriana*, *E. yarraensis* and *E. strzeleckii* differing as discussed above. The smooth-barked Tasmanian mallee *E. barberi* differs from *E. ovata* in habit and in having obovoid buds and more cupular fruit.

Origin of Name

Eucalyptus ovata: Latin *ovatus*, ovate, referring to the leaf shape.

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