

## *Eucalyptus phenax* subsp. *compressa*

### Kangaroo Island mallee

#### Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Dumaria | Rufispermae

#### Nomenclature

**Eucalyptus phenax** subsp. **compressa** D.Nicolle, *J. Adelaide Bot. Gard.* 19: 84 (2000).

T: South Australia: Kangaroo Island Region: Playford Highway, 1.1 km south-west of junction of road to Emu Bay, Kangaroo Island, 9 Mar. 1977, *P.J.Lang* 733; holotype: AD; isotype: AD.

#### Description

**Mallee or shrub** 3–8 m tall. Forming a lignotuber.

**Bark** smooth, creamy-grey to brown, decorticating in ribbons, sometimes accumulating at the base.

**Branchlets** have oil glands in the pith.

**Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm):** stem rounded in cross-section, smooth; juvenile leaves alternate, petiolate, ovate to lanceolate, 5–9 cm long, 1–2.5 cm wide, base tapering to petiole, margin entire, apex pointed, green.

**Adult leaves** alternate, petiole 1.5–2 cm long; blade lanceolate to falcate, 6–11 cm long, 1.5–3.5 cm wide, flat, base tapering to petiole, margin entire, apex pointed, concolorous, glossy, green, side-veins at an acute or wider angle to midrib, moderately to densely reticulate, intramarginal vein present, oil glands intersectional.

**Inflorescence** axillary single, peduncle 0.8–1.4 cm long, buds 7, sessile. **Mature buds** cylindrical to ovoid (0.7–1.3 cm long, 0.4–0.6 cm wide), usually with longitudinal ribs, operculum conical to turban-shaped (0.4–0.7 cm long), scar present, stamens inflexed, cuboid to wedge shaped versatile anthers, dehiscing by longitudinal slits (non-confluent), style long, stigma tapered or blunt, locules 3 or 4, the placentae each with 4 vertical ovule rows. Flowers white or creamy white.

**Fruit**, sessile, cup-shaped to cylindrical to barrel-shaped, 0.6–0.7 cm long, 0.6–1 cm wide, disc raised to level to descending, valves 3 or 4, near rim level or enclosed.

**Seeds** reddish brown, glossy, 1.5–2 mm long, flattened-ovoid, dorsal surface smooth or irregularly wrinkled, sometimes lacunose, hilum ventral.

**Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10):** cotyledons reniform; stems square to rounded in cross-section; leaves always petiolate, opposite for ca 3 pairs then alternate, ovate, 4–7.5 cm long, 2–4.5 cm wide, dull, green.

#### Flowering Time

Flowering time unknown.

#### Notes

*Eucalyptus phenax* is a mallee species widespread in mallee scrubs of southern Australia, from the southern part of the northern wheatbelt of Western Australia near Bolgart, east through the southern wheatbelt to the Esperance subcoastal plains, also in South Australia in the Gawler Ranges, Eyre Peninsula, Kangaroo Island, Murray Mallee and eastwards to the Little Desert and Sunset Country in north-western Victoria (but not New South Wales). The stems are smooth-barked and the adult leaves glossy green.

In the classification of Brooker (2000) *Eucalyptus repullulans* belongs in *Eucalyptus* subgenus *Symphyomyrtus* section *Dumaria* having these features: buds initially with two opercula the outer shed early, stamens strongly inflexed, ovules in 4 rows on the placentae and cotyledons reniform. Within section *Dumaria* the species belongs to a large sub-group of closely related species (series *Rufispermae*, 37 described species and subspecies) diagnosed by glandular pith in the branchlets, cuboid to wedge shaped versatile anthers, and by the reddish brown and glossy, flattish seeds which are unique to the series.

In Victoria and South Australia *Eucalyptus phenax* is distinguished from *E. dumosa*, *E. cyanophylla*, *E. percostata* and *E. congobata* by its glossy green leaves; and from *E. pileata* and *E. caklcareana* by smaller buds and fruit. In Western Australia *E. phenax* subsp. *phenax* can often be difficult to distinguish from the following mallee taxa: *E. congobata* subsp. *perata*, *E. pileata* and *E. arguitifolia*.



*E. conglobata* subsp. *perata* has consistently sessile buds and fruit and only slightly glossy leaves, *E. pileata* has buds with the operculum consistently wider than the hypanthium whilst *E. argutifolia*, which is found only in the Wabbling Hill area north of Perth, is very similar to *E. phenax* subsp. *phenax* differing only in the slightly broader adult leaves and consistently round-topped buds (not conical).

There are two subspecies:

**E. phenax** subsp. **phenax**

Differs from subsp. *compressa* by the narrower leaves, shorter peduncles, longer pedicels, and less crowded fruit that are longer than wide. It is the widespread mallee across southern Australia but not on Kangaroo Island.

**E. phenax** subsp. **compressa**

Contrasts with subsp. *phenax* especially in the sessile, crowded buds and fruit. It occurs on Kangaroo Island and southern Fleurieu Peninsula and intergrades with subsp. *phenax* north and east of Goolwa.

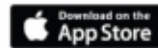
### Origin of Name

*Eucalyptus phenax*: Greek *phenax*, impostor, referring to the fact that this species was incorrectly placed under the name of *E. anceps* for many years.

subsp. *compressa*: Latin *compressus*, compressed, referring to the fruit.

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