

Eucalyptus phenax subsp. *phenax*

Green dumosa mallee

Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Dumaria | Rufispermae

Nomenclature

Eucalyptus phenax Brooker & Slee, *Muelleria* 9: 77 (1996) subsp. **phenax**



T: South Australia, 12.7 km from Duke's Hwy towards Pinnaroo, 35°17'27''S, 139°37'30''E, 26 Jan. 1995, *D.Nicolle 1212, R.Nicolle & M.I.H.Brooker*: holo: AD; iso: CANB, MEL, NSW, PERTH.

Description

Mallee to 7 m tall. Forming a lignotuber.

Bark usually smooth, cream to grey and coppery, at times with ribbons of decorticated bark in the upper branches.

Branchlets have oil glands in the pith.

Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm): stem rounded or square in cross-section; juvenile leaves always petiolate, opposite until nodes 4 to 5 then alternate, ovate to lanceolate or broadly elliptical, 4–8.5 cm long, 0.9–3 cm wide, dull, bluish green to green.

Adult leaves alternate, petiole 0.7–3 cm long; blade lanceolate, 5–12 cm long, 0.8–2.8 cm wide, base tapering to petiole, concolorous, glossy, green, side-veins at an acute or wider angle to midrib, densely to very densely reticulate with erose veinlets, intramarginal vein parallel to and just within margin, oil glands intersectional.

Inflorescence axillary unbranched, peduncles 0.3–1.8 cm long, buds 7 or 9, sessile to shortly pedicellate, pedicels 0–0.3 cm long. **Mature buds** cylindrical to ovoid (0.7–1.1 cm long, 0.4–0.6 cm wide), green to red or yellowish, not or only slightly ribbed longitudinally on hypanthium, scar present, operculum conical to rounded (0.3–0.6 cm long), usually radially striate, stamens inflexed, cuboid to wedge shaped versatile anthers, dorsifixed, dehiscing by longitudinal slits (non-confluent), style long, stigma blunt, locules 3 to 5, the placentae each with 4 vertical ovule rows. Flowers white.

Fruit sessile or pedicellate, pedicels 0–0.3 cm long, cup-shaped to cylindrical, 0.4–1 cm long, 0.5–0.8 cm wide, scarcely ribbed longitudinally, disc descending, valves 3 to 5, near rim level or enclosed.

Seeds reddish brown and glossy, 1–2.5 mm long, flattened-ovoid, dorsal surface smooth or shallowly reticulate, sometimes lacunose, hilum ventral.

Cultivated seedlings (measured at node 10): cotyledons reniform; stems square to rounded in cross-section; leaves always petiolate, opposite for 4 to 6 nodes then alternate, ovate, 5–9.5 cm long, 3.5–4.5 cm wide, dull, green.

Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in January, February, March, April, May, October and November.

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. conglobata* 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. conglobata* subsp. *perata*, *E. pileata* and *E. argutifolia*.

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, alluding to the fact that this species was incorrectly placed under the name of *E. anceps* for many years.

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