

# *Eucalyptus piperita* subsp. *urceolaris*

## Sydney peppermint

### Classification

Eucalyptus | Eucalyptus | Cineraceae | Piperitales

### Nomenclature

***Eucalyptus piperita*** subsp. ***urceolaris*** (Maiden & Blakely) L.A.S.Johnson & Blaxell, *Contr. New South Wales Natl Herb.* 4: 381 (1973).

*Eucalyptus urceolaris* Maiden & Blakely in J.H.Maiden, *Crit. Revis. Eucalyptus* 8: 10, t. 45 fig. 6 (1929). T: Wingello, NSW, Sept. 1899, *J.L.Boorman NSW 132541*; holo: NSW.

### Description

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

**Bark** rough on trunk and larger limbs, sometimes also on smaller branches, finely fibrous or peppermint-type, grey or grey-brown; branches usually smooth, white to cream or grey, often powdery.

**Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm):** stem rounded in cross-section, sometimes warty; juvenile leaves opposite, sessile to subsessile and amplexicaul for ca 5 to 7 nodes then alternate, petiolate, ovate to elliptical, 4.0–12.5 cm long, 1.7–6.5 cm wide, base truncate or tapering to petiole, tending to oblique, discolorous, dull, blue-green.

**Adult leaves** alternate, petiole 1–2.2 cm long; blade lanceolate to falcate to ovate, 8–20 cm long, 1.7–4.7 cm wide, base oblique or tapering to petiole, concolorous, dull, green to blue-green, side-veins at an acute or wider angle to midrib, moderately to densely reticulate, intramarginal vein parallel to and well removed from margin, oil glands island or obscure.

**Inflorescence** axillary unbranched, peduncles 0.5–2.5 cm long, buds 9 to ?15 per umbel, pedicels 0.2–0.6 cm long. **Mature buds** fusiform, 0.5–0.7 cm long, 0.2–0.3 cm wide, yellow or creamy, scar absent, operculum conical to beaked, stamens irregularly flexed, all fertile, anthers reniform to cordate, versatile, dorsifixed, dehiscing by confluent slits, style long, stigma tapered, locules (3)4, the placentae each with 2 vertical ovule rows. Flowers white.

**Fruit** on pedicels 0.1–0.5 cm long, conspicuously urceolate, 0.5–0.8 cm long, 0.5–0.8 cm wide, disc descending, valves (3)4, enclosed.

**Seeds** dark brown to black, 1.2–2.2 mm long, pyramidal or obliquely pyramidal, dorsal surface usually smooth, hilum terminal.

**Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10):** cotyledons reniform; stems rounded in cross-section; leaves sessile, opposite, broadly elliptic-ovate with amplexicaul bases for 5 to 7 nodes, then becoming alternate, shortly petiolate, ovate, 5–11 cm long, 3–6 cm wide, base rounded to tapering then oblique, margin entire, apex pointed, discolorous, dull, green.

### Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in January and February.

### Notes

*Eucalyptus piperita* is a small to medium-sized forest tree species of coastal plains, ranges and the eastern side of the tablelands of New South Wales from the Batemans Bay area of the South Coast north to Nabriac south of Taree. *E. piperita* is not closely related to any other species and the common name, Sydney Peppermint, is somewhat misleading as it is not a peppermint in the traditionally accepted sense. It has rough bark over the whole trunk but not the branches. The juvenile leaves resemble those of ashes in being soon alternate, petiolate, pendulous, broadly ovate. Adult leaves are relatively broad, dull, with moderate reticulation, buds are in > sevens, fusiform, often curved, opercula very acute.

There are two subspecies:

#### ***E. piperita*** subsp. ***piperita***

Occurs northward from the Central Tablelands of New South Wales. Subsp. *piperita* is characterised by barrel-shaped fruit.

#### ***E. piperita*** subsp. ***urceolaris***



Occurs south from the Central Tablelands of New South Wales. Subsp. *urceolaris* is characterised by the urceolate fruit.

The distinction between the two subspecies is often unclear.

*Eucalyptus piperita* belongs in *Eucalyptus* subgenus *Eucalyptus* section *Cineraceae* having the following characters: cotyledons reniform, juvenile leaves alternate, bluish, adult leaves with side-veins more or less acute, single axillary inflorescences with buds in clusters of nine to ?15, buds with single operculum, stamens with reniform anthers, ovules in two rows, and seeds more or less pyramidal. Within section *Cineraceae*, *E. piperita* is somewhat isolated (series *Piperitales*) by the combination of finely fibrous rough bark, stamens irregularly flexed and all fertile, and style long. *E. piperita* is easily distinguished from other finely fibrous rough-barked trees within its area of distribution by the glabrous alternate petiolate juvenile leaves, fusiform buds and fruit with descending disc.

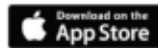
### Origin of Name

*Eucalyptus piperita*: Latin *piperitus*, pepper-like, probably referring to the essential oils as the original description refers to the peppermint smell.

subsp. *urceolaris*: Latin *urceolaris*, urn-shaped, referring to the fruit.

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