

Eucalyptus platypus subsp. *platypus*

Moort

Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Bisectae | Glandulosae | Erectae | Abundae

Nomenclature

Eucalyptus platypus Hook., *Icon. Pl.* t. 849 (1851) subsp. **platypus**.

T: near King George Sound, W.A., *J.Drummond 183*; holo: K; iso: BM, FI, K, LE, MEL, NSW, PERTH, W.

Eucalyptus obcordata Turcz., *Bull. Cl. Phys-Math. Acad. Imp. Sci. Saint-Petersburgh* 10: 337 (1852). T: near King George Sound, W.A., *J.Drummond 183*; holo: LE; iso: BM, FI, K, LE, MEL, NSW, PERTH, W.

Description

Mallet or **marlock** to 8 m tall. Lignotuber absent.

Bark smooth throughout, grey-green over coppery brown.

Branchlets have oil glands in the pith.

Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm): stems rounded in cross-section; juvenile leaves always petiolate, alternate, ovate to orbicular, 4–6.5 cm long, 4–6.5 cm wide, margin indented, apex rounded to emarginate.

Adult leaves alternate, thick, held erect, petioles 0.3–2 cm long; blade orbicular to very broadly elliptical, (2)3–5(6) cm long, 2–4(6.3) cm wide, base tapering to petiole, margin entire, crenulate or distantly indented, apex emarginate to rounded, concolorous, green, glossy, surface appearing "glazed", side-veins at an acute or wider angle to midrib or obscure, reticulation not visible, intramarginal vein remote from margin, oil glands numerous, slightly irregular, island.

Inflorescence axillary unbranched, spreading to pendulous, peduncles broadly flattened, 1.3–4(5) cm long at mature bud/flowering stage; buds 7(9) per umbel, sessile or shortly pedicellate (pedicels 0–0.4 cm long). **Mature buds** elongated (2.5–3.2 cm long, 0.7–0.9 cm wide) with hypanthium wider than the operculum at the join, scar present (outer operculum lost very early), inner operculum horn-shaped, ca 1.5–3 times the length of the 4-ribbed hypanthium, stamens erect, arranged in ca 3 whorls on a conspicuously broad staminophore, anthers oblong, versatile, dorsifixed, dehiscent by longitudinal slits, style long and straight, stigma blunt to slightly dilated, locules 4(5), the placentae each with (?4 or) 6 vertical rows of ovules. Flowers usually creamy white to lemon-green, rarely pink-red.

Fruit down-turned, usually sessile, rarely pedicellate to 0.2 cm long, obconical with 4 longitudinal ridges, 1–1.7 cm long, (0.8)1–1.2 cm wide, staminophore broad, disc descending, valves 4(5), held at about rim level.

Seeds blackish brown, 0.7–2 mm long, ovoid to flattened-ovoid, dorsal surface shallowly and clearly reticulate, hilum ventral.

Cultivated seedlings (measured at node 10): cotyledons Y-shaped (bisected); stems rounded in cross-section, scabrid; leaves always petiolate, opposite for 4–5 nodes then alternate, ovate or orbicular, 3.5–5 cm long, 2.5–3.5 cm long, dull and scabrid until node ca 9–10 then becoming green and glossy.

Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in January, February and December.

Notes

Eucalyptus platypus is a mallet or marlock species endemic to Western Australia, of south coastal and subcoastal areas, from Gnowangerup and Tambellup north of Albany east towards Salmon Gums and Speddingup, often in dense pure stands on hard clayey soils. The bark is smooth, sometimes shiny, and the adult leaves glossy, dark green to olive green.

Eucalyptus platypus is most likely to be confused with *E. utilis*, which differs in having narrower adult leaves mostly lanceolate, not elliptical to orbicular, and bud clusters on spreading to erect, not down-turned, peduncles. *E. platypus* usually occurs on heavy soils, *E. utilis* on coastal sand-dunes. *E. platypus* is similar in habit to *E. vesiculosa* but differs in having buds with smooth, not very warty opercula, erect,



not inflexed, stamens and yellow-green (rarely pink) flowers not red. *Eucalyptus nutans*, restricted to coastal and near coastal sites east of Albany, was for many years included in *E. platypus* being similar in habit, adult leaves and peduncles but differs in having buds with a much shorter operculum more or less equal to the hypanthium in length, red/pink flowers and fruit with 5(6) valves.

There are two subspecies:

E. platypus subsp. **platypus**

This form is the widespread mallet or marlock with predominantly round leaves and peduncles 1.3-4(5) cm long. It occurs from Gnowangerup and Tambellup east towards Speddingup.

E. platypus subsp. **congregata**

This form is a mallet or marlock with predominantly elliptical leaves and peduncles 2.7-7 cm long. It is found from north of Ravensthorpe east to near Salmon Gums.

	Operculum length relative to hypanthium	Flower colour	Fruit width cm	Adult leaf shape
<i>nutans</i>	operculum = hypanthium	red or pink-red	1.4–1.9	elliptic, oblong, suborbicular
<i>platypus</i> (both subsp.)	operculum 1.5–3 times hypanthium	pale yellow-green, rarely red	0.8–1.3	elliptic to orbicular
<i>utilis</i>	1.2–2.3 times hypanthium	creamy white	0.7–1.0	ovate to lanceolate

In the classification of Brooker (2000) *Eucalyptus platypus* belongs in *Eucalyptus* subgenus *Symphyomyrtus* section *Bisectae* subsection *Glandulosae* because the buds have an operculum scar, cotyledons are bisected and branchlets have oil glands in the pith. Within this very large subsection, *E. platypus* is only closely related to *E. nutans* and *E. utilis*, having similar general habit, four-angled buds in clusters of seven on conspicuous broadly flattened and often long peduncles, erect stamens, and highly glandular leaves with indented margins.

Origin of Name

Eucalyptus platypus: Greek *platy*, wide, broad and *-pus*, -footed, referring to the peduncle.

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