

# *Eucalyptus protensa*

## Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Bisectae | Glandulosae | Erectae | Annulatae

## Nomenclature

***Eucalyptus protensa*** L.A.S.Johnson & K.D.Hill, *Telopea* 4: 219 (1991).



T: Western Australia: 60 km E of Norseman along Eyre Highway (32°04'S, 122°22'E), 14 Nov. 1983, *K.Hill 690 & D.Blaxell*; holo: NSW; iso: CANB, K, PERTH.

## Description

**Mallet** to 10 m tall. Non-lignotuberous.

**Bark** smooth, of 'oily' appearance, dark grey to light brownish grey over yellowish green or bronze.

Pith glands present in **branchlets**; three-year old branchlets may become glaucous.

**Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm)**: not seen.

**Adult leaves** held more or less erect, alternate, petiole 1–2 cm long; blade narrowly lanceolate, (4.3)5–12.5 cm long, 0.7–1.7 cm wide, base tapering to petiole, margins entire, apex pointed, concolorous, glossy, dark green, side-veins acute or obscure, reticulation obscured by numerous round oil glands, intramarginal vein close to edge or obscure.

**Inflorescence** axillary, single, peduncles rounded to only narrowly flattened, scarcely broadened apically, erect or rigidly down-turned, 0.7–1.3 cm long, buds 7, conspicuously pedicellate (pedicels 0.3–0.7 cm long). **Mature buds** 2.9–4 cm long, 0.6–0.9 cm wide, scar present (outer operculum shed early), operculum very elongated, finely tapering and often curved, to 7 times the length of the globular hypanthium and narrower than it at the join, stamens erect, anthers narrowly oblong, versatile, sub-basifixed with the filament tapering abruptly, dehiscing by longitudinal slits, style straight, just shorter than the longest stamens, stigma tapering to blunt, locules (3)4, the placentae convex, each with 4 to 6 vertical ovule rows or the rows indistinct. Flowers yellow-green.

**Fruit** erect or down-turned, pedicellate (pedicels 0.1–0.6 cm long), hemispherical or truncate-globose, 0.6–0.8 cm long, 0.8–1.3 cm wide, disc narrow, descending obliquely to vertically, valves (3)4, strongly exerted.

**Seeds** brown to straw-coloured, 1.8–3 mm long, cuboid to ovoid, dorsal surface narrowly and irregularly fissured, sides angled, margin irregular, hilum terminal or ventral. (Seedcoat often referred to as being honey-combed.)

**Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10)**: cotyledons Y-shaped (bisected); stems square in cross-section, smooth; leaves always petiolate, opposite for 5 to 7 nodes then alternate, ovate, 2.5–4 cm long, 1–3.3 cm wide, base truncate to tapering, green to grey-green, dull.

## Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in September, October and November.

## Notes

A small low-branching smooth-barked mallet endemic to Western Australia. It occurs from just south of Norseman east towards Balladonia in the Fraser Range area, on calcareous red loams.

*Eucalyptus protensa* belongs in *Eucalyptus* subgenus *Symphyomyrtus* section *Bisectae* subsection *Glandulosae* because the buds have two opercula, the cotyledons are bisected and the branchlets have numerous oil glands in the pith. Within subsection *Glandulosae*, the 3 species *E. extensa*, *E. protensa* and *E. annulata* form series *Erectae* subseries *Annulatae* having smooth bark, buds with long operculum, erect stamens, adult leaves with numerous oil glands obscuring the sideveins and reticulation, and seed with fissured seed coat.

*Eucalyptus protensa* is most closely related to *E. annulata* from the southern sub-coastal and southern wheatbelt areas, and to *E. extensa* which is found in the area between Salmon Gums, Hyden and Southern Cross. *E. protensa* is easily distinguished from both these species by having slender scarcely flattened peduncles, conspicuously pedicellate buds, and opercula that taper finely, are often curved and are much longer than the hypanthium. *E. extensa* has only shortly pedicellate buds that are stouter than those of *E. protensa*. Both *E. extensa* and *E. annulata* have broadly flattened peduncles. *E. protensa* and *E. extensa* are mallets whereas *E. annulata* seems to be predominantly mallee in habit.



It is related to the gimlets (series *Contortae*) by habit, bark type, seedcoat and the prominently exerted valves of the fruit but shares some bud and leaf characters with *E. eremophila* and related species (subseries *Annulatae*), viz. erect stamens and leaves with crowded round oil glands that completely obscure the venation.

### Origin of Name

*Eucalyptus protensa*: Latin *protensus*, stretched out, extended, referring to the long opercula.

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