

# *Eucalyptus utilis*

## Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Bisectae | Glandulosae | Erectae | Abundae

## Nomenclature

***Eucalyptus utilis*** Brooker & Hopper, *Nuytsia* 14: 349 (2002).

T: Hopetoun, 19 Oct. 1964, *C.A. Gardner 14888*; holotype: PERTH.

*Eucalyptus platypus* var. *heterophylla* Blakely, *Key Eucalypts* 107 (1934). Type: near Ongerup, Western Australia, 30 May 1917, *F. Stoward s.n.*; holotype: NSW. = *E. platypus* Hook. X *E. spathulata* Hook. (fide S.D.Hopper).

## Description

**Mallet** to 7 m tall though often bushy. Lignotuber absent.

**Bark** smooth throughout, grey to grey-green over coppery to orange.

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

**Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm):** stems rounded in cross-section, may feel rough on lower parts; juvenile leaves always petiolate, alternate, ovate, 2–8 cm long, 1.5–3.5 cm wide, green to grey-green, lowest leaves may feel rough.

**Adult leaves** alternate, thick, held erect, petioles 0.8–2 cm long; blade ovate to lanceolate, rarely almost elliptical, 4.5–8 cm long, 1–3(4) cm wide, base tapering to petiole, margin entire or indented, apex pointed, concolorous, green, glossy, surface appearing "glazed", side-veins acute or obscure, reticulation not visible, intramarginal vein remote from margin, oil glands numerous, round or slightly irregular.

**Inflorescence** axillary unbranched, peduncles broadly flattened, erect to slightly spreading in bud and flower stage, 1.3–3.3 cm long; buds 7 per umbel, shortly pedicellate or sessile (pedicels 0–0.5 cm long). **Mature buds** elongated ovoid, 1.2–2.8 cm long, 0.4–0.7 cm wide, with the hypanthium wider than the operculum at the join, scar present (outer operculum lost early), inner operculum horn-shaped, sometimes slightly warty, ca 1.2–2.3 times the length of the ribbed hypanthium, stamens erect, in about 3 whorls on the broad staminophore, anthers oblong, versatile, dorsifixed, dehiscent by longitudinal slits, style long and straight, stigma blunt to slightly dilated, locules 3 or 4, the placentae each with 4 vertical rows of ovules. Flowers creamy white.

**Fruit** on down-turned to spreading peduncles, sessile or shortly pedicellate (pedicels 0–0.6 cm long, obconical or less commonly almost barrel-shaped, 0.8–1.3 cm long, 0.7–1 cm wide, staminophore conspicuous, disc descending, valves 3 or 4, held at rim level or with fragile tips scarcely exerted.

**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 or warty throughout; leaves always petiolate, opposite for 2 to 6 nodes then alternate, deltoid to ovate, 2–5 cm long, 1.5–3.5 cm wide, green to grey-green, scabrid on both surfaces until at least node 15.

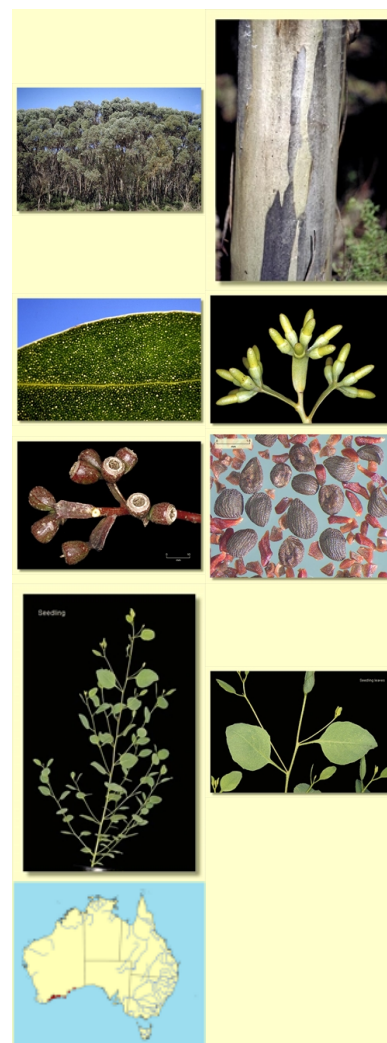
## Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in January and December.

*Eucalyptus utilis* is very common and popular in cultivation in southern Australia and has long been erroneously referred to as *E. platypus* var. *heterophylla*, the type specimen of which from near Ongerup has been shown to be a hybrid between *E. platypus* and *E. spathulata*. *Eucalyptus utilis* is widely planted as a street tree and also as a windbreak on farms.

## Notes

A mallet or bushy marlock endemic to Western Australia, of coastal distribution from east of Albany to Esperance, Cape Arid, some islands of Recherche Archipelago, and sporadically north-east to Twilight Cove–Baxter Cliffs area; particularly in dunes. The bark is smooth and the adult leaves glazed olive green, buds clusters are borne on spreading broadly flattened peduncles and the buds have an elongated operculum.



*Eucalyptus utilis* is distinguished from both subspecies of *E. platypus* by having narrower, more lanceolate adult leaves, not elliptical to orbicular, bud clusters on erect to spreading, not down-turned, peduncles and coastal sand-dune habitat, not flats with heavy soil. *E. utilis* like *E. platypus* and *E. nutans* lacks a lignotuber. *Eucalyptus nutans* has similar habit, adult leaves and erect staminal arrangement to *E. utilis* but differs in having buds with a much shorter operculum, red/pink flowers and fruit with 5(6) valves. *Eucalyptus cernua* and *E. vesiculosa* differ from *E. utilis* in having consistently inflexed, not erect, stamens in bud, prominently down-turned bud clusters and short rounded opercula, not long horn-shaped.

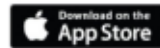
	Operculum length relative to hypanthium	Flower colour	Fruit width cm	Adult leaf shape
<i>nutans</i>	operculum = hypanthium	red or pink-red	1.4–1.9	elliptic, oblong, suborbicular
<i>platypus</i> (both subsp.)	operculum 1.5–3 times hypanthium	pale yellow-green, rarely red	0.8–1.3	elliptic to orbicular
<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 utilis* 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. utilis* is closely related to *E. platypus* and *E. nutans*, having similar general habit, four-angled buds in clusters of seven on conspicuous broadly flattened and sometimes long peduncles, erect stamens, and highly glandular leaves with obscure venation and indented margins.

### Origin of Name

*Eucalyptus utilis*: Latin *utilis*, useful, referring to the use of this species in common street and farm plantings.

Copyright © CANBR 2020, all rights reserved.



Web edition hosted at <https://apps.lucidcentral.org/euclid>