

Eucalyptus varia subsp. *varia*

Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Bisectae | Glandulosae | Levispermae | Levispermae

Nomenclature

Eucalyptus varia Brooker & Hopper, *Nuytsia* 8: 162 (1991) subsp. ***varia***.



T: 90 km E of Esperance P.O., Western Australia, 33°45'S, 122°47'E, 7 Feb. 1989, *M.I.H.Brooker 10168, S.D.Hopper & D.Vincent*; holo: PERTH; iso: AD, CANB, MEL, NSW.

Description

Mallee to 7 m tall. Forming a lignotuber.

Bark smooth throughout, grey over greenish brown and pink to pale coppery.

Branchlets usually lacking pith glands, rarely 1 or 2 at nodes.

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

Adult leaves alternate, petioles 0.8–1.5 cm; blade narrowly lanceolate, 4.8–9 cm long, 0.9–2 cm wide, base tapering to petiole, margin entire, apex pointed, concolorous, dull and bluish green maturing slightly glossy and green inside the crown, side-veins greater than 45° to midrib, reticulation moderate to dense, intramarginal vein usually remote from margin, oil glands mostly island.

Inflorescence axillary unbranched, peduncles widening apically, 1–1.7(2) cm long, buds 9 or 11, pedicellate (pedicels 0.3–0.5 cm long). **Mature buds** long-fusiform and slightly curved (1.6–2.7 cm long, 0.2–0.5 cm wide), scar present, operculum horn-shaped, about three times the length of the hypanthium and equal to it in width at the join, few outer stamens erect, most stamens variably deflexed, anthers oblong, dorsifixed, dehiscing by longitudinal slits, style long and straight, stigma blunt to rounded, locules 3, the placentae each with 4 vertical rows of ovules. Flowers yellow.

Fruit pedicellate (pedicels 0.2–0.5 cm long), barrel-shaped to cylindrical, 0.7–1.1 cm long, 0.5–0.7 cm wide, disc descending vertically, valves 3, at rim level or enclosed.

Seeds pale brown or straw-coloured, 1–2 mm long, usually sub-spherical, surface smooth, hilum ventral/terminal.

Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10): cotyledons Y-shaped (bisected); stems rounded in cross-section; leaves always petiolate, opposite for 3–5 nodes then alternate, lanceolate or less commonly ovate, 6–10.5 cm long, 0.8–2.5 cm wide, dull to slightly glossy, green.

Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in January, September and October.

Notes

Eucalyptus varia is a species of mallee endemic to Western Australia, found north-west of Esperance extending east towards Condingup. The adult leaves are dull, light bluish green to green but mature inside the crown to glossy green.

Eucalyptus varia is a somewhat anomalous species in *Eucalyptus* subgenus *Symphyomyrtus* section *Bisectae* subsection *Glandulosae*, because whilst the cotyledons are bisected and the buds have an operculum scar, as do other species in this group, the branchlets usually lack the characteristic pith oil glands or have very few. Within this subsection *E. varia* is one of a group of species that form series *Levispermae* subseries *Levispermae* characterised by having smooth spherical seed, a peduncle that widens apically, buds that are narrowly fusiform with some stamens erect and others variably deflexed, usually dull, blue-grey to grey-green adult leaves, and few, if any, oil glands in the pith.

E. varia is closely related to *E. pluricaulis* but occurs further to the east. *E. varia* differs in adult leaves that are generally smaller (although there is considerable overlap in leaf dimensions between the two species). Leaves of *E. varia* are greener than those of *E. pluricaulis*. The low coastal mallee *E. redunca* is also closely related to *E. varia* and differs in its persistently dull green adult leaves, often longer buds (though the dimensions are not discrete) and paler lemon flowers.

In the geographic range of *E. varia* the only species likely to be confused is *E. tumida*, which has oil glands in the pith of the branchlets, fatter buds that never taper to a long fine point as do both *E. varia* and *E. pluricaulis*. *E. tumida* also has broader, slightly glossy adult leaves



and flowers that are white to very pale yellow, not distinctly yellow.

There are two weakly separated subspecies:

E. varia subsp. **varia**

Smooth-barked form. Subsp. *varia* occurs on sandplains or lateritic slopes from the Dalyup area north west of Esperance east to the Thomas River north of Cape Arid.

E. varia subsp. **salsuginosa**

This form has some basal, fibrous, rough bark and occurs on salt drainage lines and seasonally wet flats north and north-west of Esperance, particularly on tributaries of the Dalyup River, eastwards to Speddingup East.

Origin of Name

Eucalyptus varia: Latin *varius*, varying, referring to the variable stature, bark, adult leaf width, and habitat.

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