

Eucalyptus macrocarpa subsp. *macrocarpa*

mottlecuh

Name: Greek, *macro*, large, and *carpos*, fruit, in reference to the large fruits. Mottlecuh is the aboriginal name given to the species.

Authority: *Eucalyptus macrocarpa* Hook., *Icon. Pl.* 5: t. 405, 406, 407 (1842). Type: Swan R. Colony, W.A., J.Drummond 13.

Features: Resprouter, lignotuber present. Multi-stemmed. Sprawling, spreading habit. Leaves large, stalkless, silvery to blue-grey. Large, single buds coated with a white, waxy bloom. Flowers red or very rarely yellow, anthers yellow. Fruits large, woody.

Distribution & Habitat: Of widespread but scattered distribution, from north-west of Moora southwards to the east of Bindoon and south to the Kulin area in the central-southern wheatbelt. A specimen in the W.A. State Herbarium has a recorded location of just north of Wagin, however this population has not been verified despite extensive searching, and is not included on the distribution map. It usually occurs in lateritic sandy soils, on level to slightly undulating terrain, more rarely on hills high in the landscape (e.g. in the Bindoon area). Associated eucalypts include *E. accedens*, *E. albida*, *E. astrin-*



Eucalyptus subg. *Symphyomyrtus*

sect. *Bisectae* ser. *Curviptera* subser. *Xylocarpae*

gens subsp. *astringens*, *E. drummondii*, *E. horistes*, *E. incrasata*, *E. loxophleba* subsp. *gratae*, *E. pleurocarpa*, *E. pluricaulis* subsp. *pluricaulis*, *E. pyriformis* and *E. wandoo* subsp. *wandoo*.

Uses: *Eucalyptus macrocarpa* has been cultivated extensively throughout southern Australia as an ornamental shrub, prized for the large, spectacularly brilliant red flowers, which contrast stunningly with its blue-grey foliage. Due to its spreading, usually dense bushy habit, *E. macrocarpa* also has excellent potential for windbreak and screening use.

Notes: Two subspecies are recognised in *E. macrocarpa* with subsp. *elachantha* (small-leaved mottlecuh) geographically restricted to the Mingenew, Eneabba and Cataby areas, north-west of the range of subsp. *macrocarpa*. *Eucalyptus macrocarpa* subsp. *elachantha* differs from subsp. *macrocarpa* primarily by the smaller leaves (to 80 mm long x to 70 mm wide) and by the smaller buds and smaller fruits (to 30 mm long x to 50 mm wide). Intergrades between the two subspecies occur in the Tootbardi Road, north Herschell Range area, north of Badgingarra, with such intergrades characterised by their variable leaf size.

Eucalyptus macrocarpa is closely related to two other similar, single-budded species—*E. impensa* (Eneabba mallee) and *E. rhodantha* (rose mallee)—both of which are of very restricted distribution, and occur just north of the distribution of subsp. *macrocarpa*. *Eucalyptus impensa* occurs to the south-west of Eneabba and is distinguished from *E. macrocarpa* by the petiolate, non-glaucous, green leaves and distinctly stalked buds and fruits. *Eucalyptus rhodantha* occurs from west of Three Springs to the north-east of Watheroo and is distinguished from *E. macrocarpa* by the distinctly pedicellate buds and fruits.

Eucalyptus macrocarpa occasionally co-occurs with the closely related *E. pyriformis* (pear-fruited mallee), which is distinguished readily from *E. macrocarpa* by the petiolate, green, non-glaucous leaves and the distinctly pedicellate buds which are in groups of three. Where *E. macrocarpa* co-occurs with *E. pyriformis* they occasionally interbreed, producing interesting hybrid individuals.

Eucalyptus macrocarpa retains the juvenile leaves on the crown throughout the life of the plant. This feature is uncommon in eucalypts and is only shared in wheatbelt species with *E. crucis* subsp. *crucis*, *E. pleurocarpa* and *E. rhodantha*.

The fruits of *E. youngiana* (Ooldea mallee; from the Great Victoria Desert region), *E. macrocarpa* and *E. pyriformis* are the largest in the genus.

Eucalyptus carnabyi, known from only a few plants in the Calingiri and Dandaragan areas, is recognised as a hybrid between *E. drummondii* (Drummond's mallee) and *E. macrocarpa*.



Description: *Mallee*, to 5 metres tall, lignotuberous. Sprawling, bushy to spreading, open habit. **Bark** smooth, grey over creamy brown to beige. **Branchlets** glaucous, pith glands absent. **Juvenile leaves** ovate, 80–120 mm x 40–85 mm, dull, blue-grey, glaucous, sessile, retained as the crown throughout the life of the plant. **Flower buds** solitary, sessile or held on pedicels to 12 mm long. **Buds** ovoid, 47–60 mm long x 35–48 mm wide, glaucous. **Opercula** shortly beaked. **Flowers** red or very rarely yellow, anthers yellow, occurring in winter to early summer. **Fruits** hemispherical to broadly obconical, 30–50 mm long x 50–70 mm wide, sessile or pedicellate, rim thick, disc broad, ascending, valves 4 or 5, exserted. **Seeds** pale brown.