

Eucalyptus albens

White box

Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Adnataria | Apicales | Buxales | Continentes

Nomenclature

Eucalyptus albens Benth., *Fl. Austral.* 3: 219 (1867).

Eucalyptus hemiphloia var. *albens* (Benth.) Maiden, *Forest Fl. New South Wales* 1: 131 (1904). T: Macquarie R., NSW, Aug. 1817, *A. Cunningham 198*; syn: BM, CANB, K; New England, NSW, *C. Stuart s.n.*; syn: K, MEL; between Alfords and the Range, NSW, 17 June 1843, *L. Leichhardt s.n.*; syn: MEL; between Ten Mile Ck & Broken R., Vic., *F. Mueller s.n.*; syn: K, MEL.

Eucalyptus albens Miq. [nom. inval.] nom. confus.. Miquel, F.A.W. (1856) *Stirpes novohollandas a Ferd. Mullero collectas. Nederlandsch Kruidkundig Archief* 44(1): 138. T: "Booker-river (F. Müell.)." *vide* Johnson, L.A.S. *Studies in the Taxonomy of Eucalyptus. Contributions from the New South Wales National Herbarium* 3(3): 116 (1962).

Eucalyptus albens var. *elongata* Blakely, *Key Eucalypts* 237 (1934). T: Mt Topper State Forest, NSW, Oct. 1923, *L.B. Peacocke s.n.*; holo: NSW; iso: CANB.

Description

Tree to 25 m tall. Forming a lignotuber.

Bark rough on most or all of trunk and base of large branches, rarely extending to branches < 8 cm diameter, box type, often becoming tessellated, pale grey or mottled grey and white patches, smooth bark of branches predominantly white, sometimes grey, or tinged orange, pink or salmon.

Branchlets usually glaucous, pith oil glands rarely present.

Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm): stem rounded or square in cross-section, glaucous or non-glaucous; juvenile leaves alternate, petiolate, orbicular, deltoid or ovate, 5–10.5 cm long, 5–10 cm wide, margin entire, blue-green, grey-green, or blue-grey or glaucous.

Adult leaves alternate, petiolate, 1.2–3 cm long; blade lanceolate to ovate, 7–16.5 cm long, 1.7–4.3 cm wide, base tapering to petiole, margin entire, concolorous, dull, blue-green, grey-green, blue-grey to glaucous, side-veins mostly greater than 45° to midrib, densely to very densely reticulate, intramarginal vein parallel to and just within margin or well removed from it, oil glands mostly intersectional or obscure.

Inflorescence terminal compound or axillary unbranched, peduncles 0.8–1.8 cm long, buds 7 per umbel, sessile or with pedicels to 0.7 cm long. **Mature buds** fusiform, often slightly curved, 0.8–1.8 cm long, 0.3–0.6 cm wide, glaucous or sometimes green, slightly angled, scar absent, operculum conical, stamens irregularly flexed, anthers cuboid, adnate to filament, dehiscing by broad lateral pores, style long, locules 3 or 4(5) each with 4 vertical ovule rows. Flowers white.

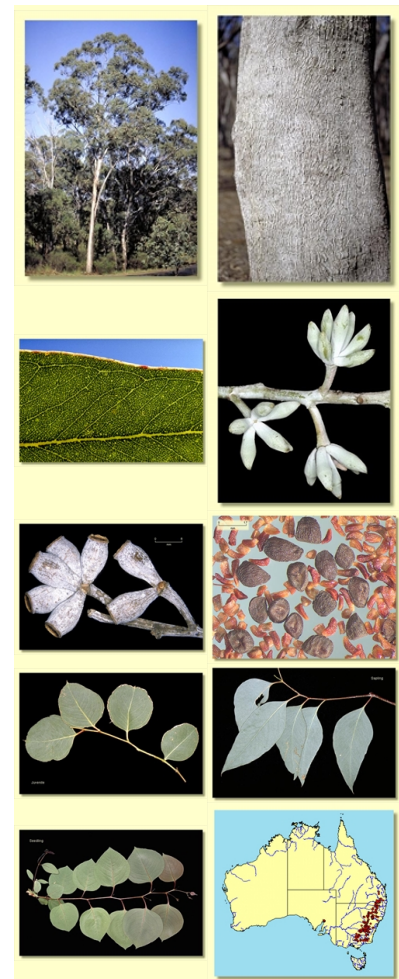
Fruit sessile or on pedicels to 0.5(1) cm long, cylindrical, urceolate or barrel-shaped, 0.6–1.4 cm long, 0.5–1 cm wide, often slightly angled longitudinally, glaucous or non-glaucous, disc descending, valves 3 or 4(5), enclosed.

Seed blackish, brown or grey, 1–2 mm long, irregularly flattened-ovoid, sometimes pointed at one end, lacunose or not, dorsal surface smooth or shallowly pitted, hilum ventral.

Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10): cotyledons reniform to oblong; stems rounded or square in cross-section, usually glaucous; leaves always petiolate, opposite for 3 to 5 nodes then alternate, orbicular to ovate, 5–10.5 cm long, 3–7.5 cm wide, base rounded or truncate, grey-green to glaucous.

Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August and September.



Notes

A small to medium-sized box tree occurring from south-eastern Queensland extensively throughout the western slopes of New South Wales to north-eastern Victoria (as far as Yea) and far eastern Victoria (Wulgulmerang - Deddick area), with a small disjunct population near Melrose in the southern Flinders Range of South Australia. It has extensive pale grey to whitish box bark, large juvenile leaves that are grey to glaucous and pendulous, dull adult leaves that are greyish to glaucous and elongated usually glaucous buds. These features distinguish it from other box trees. In addition it occurs on more elevated, stony sites than the related box tree *E. microcarpa*.

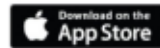
Eucalyptus albens belongs in *Eucalyptus* subgenus *Symphyomyrtus* section *Adnataria* (the boxes) because the buds have two opercula, ovules are in four rows, seeds are flattened-ovoid, cotyledons are reniform, and anthers are rigid on the staminal filaments. Within section *Adnataria*, *E. albens* is part of a subgroup, series *Buxeales* subseries *Continentes*, further distinguished by having buds that retain the outer operculum until flowering time when both opercula are shed together. Most species in this group are from eastern Australia and have all stamens fertile and are woodland trees of hills and plains, often dominant in the landscape, viz. *E. albens*, *E. moluccana*, *E. microcarpa* and *E. pilligaensis*. The three latter species all have a green crown and non-glaucous branchlets, buds, fruit and juvenile leaves.

Other box species occurring within the general geographic range of *E. albens* are *E. melliodora*, *E. polyanthemos* subsp. *polyanthemos* and *E. conica*, all of which have outer stamens that are infertile (lack anthers). *E. melliodora* has axillary inflorescences and more hemispherical to globular fruit, and much smaller juvenile and adult leaves than does *E. albens*; *E. polyanthemos* subsp. *polyanthemos* is smooth-barked and has shorter rounded adult leaves and smaller fruit (never more than 0.6 cm long), whilst the rough-barked *E. conica* differs from *E. albens* in having smaller obconical fruit (to 0.6 cm long), smaller juvenile leaves and a greener crown. Other box species, viz. *E. viridis*, *E. polybractea*, *E. froggattii*, *E. odorata*, *E. albopurpurea*, *E. sp.* Flinders Ranges and *E. porosa* are mallees of drier areas, (occasionally occurring as small trees) and are unlikely to be confused with *E. albens*.

Origin of Name

Eucalyptus albens: Latin *albens*, white, referring to the general appearance of the tree and the white wax on the flower buds and fruits.

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