

# *Eucalyptus merrickiae*

## Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Dumaria | Merrickianae

## Nomenclature

***Eucalyptus merrickiae*** Maiden & Blakely, J. & *Proc. Roy. Soc. New South Wales* 59: 192 (1925).



T: Grass Patch, W.A., 23 May 1924, C.A. Gardner 2218; holo: NSW; iso: CANB, PERTH.

## Description

**Mallee** to 4 m tall or bushy **shrub**. Forming a lignotuber.

**Bark** rough and flaky, light grey-brown or grey-yellow, for part or all of trunks and base of larger branches, smooth above light grey.

**Branchlets** have oil glands in the pith, though sometimes small or obscure.

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

**Adult leaves** stiff, erect, alternate, petioles 0.4–0.8 cm long; blade linear, 5–8.5 cm long, 0.4–0.8 cm wide, base tapering to petiole, margin entire, apex pointed, concolorous, dull greyish green weathering to glossy green, side-veins acute or side-veins and reticulation obscured by numerous island oil glands, intramarginal vein near margin or obscure.

**Inflorescence** axillary unbranched, peduncles 0.2–0.5 cm long, buds 3, normally shortly pedicellate, rarely sessile, pedicels 0–0.1 cm long. **Mature buds** cylindrical or slightly flared below operculum (0.7–1.2 cm long, 0.5–0.6 cm wide), scar present, operculum conical or rounded, sometimes apiculate (0.25–0.5 cm long), stamens inflexed, anthers oblong to narrowly wedge-shaped, versatile, dorsifixed, dehiscent by longitudinal slits, style long and straight, stigma rounded to tapered, locules 4, the placentae each with 4 vertical rows of ovules. Flowers creamy white.

**Fruit** normally shortly pedicellate, rarely sessile, pedicels 0–0.1 cm long, cylindrical, 0.6–1 cm long, 0.6–0.8 cm wide, disc descending, valves 4, enclosed or near rim level.

**Seeds** ornamentation whitish to translucent over brown background, 1.5–2.5 mm long, ovoid or flattened ovoid, dorsal surface pitted below the ornamentation, hilum ventral.

**Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10):** cotyledons reniform; stems rounded in cross-section; leaves sessile to subsessile for at least 17 nodes, opposite for ca 4 or 5 nodes then alternate, linear, 4–8 cm long, 0.1–0.4 cm wide, dull, grey-green to green.

## Flowering Time

Flowering has been recorded in November.

The species may have a use in salinity reclamation.

## Notes

A mallee from southern Western Australia, restricted to an area just north of Esperance, east of Truslove extending to north of Mt Ridley, often on white sand near salt lakes. The bark is rough and the crown dense, with erect linear adult leaves.

*Eucalyptus merrickiae* belongs in *Eucalyptus* subgenus *Symphyomyrtus* section *Dumaria* because the buds have two opercula, stamens are strongly inflexed, ovules are in four rows on the placentae and cotyledons are reniform. Within section *Dumaria* it is closely related to only one species, *E. surgens*, and these two species, with their pitted, ornamented seed, erect leaves, glandular pith, erect inflorescences with stout shortly pedicellate cylindrical buds, constitute the small series *Merrickianae*.

*E. merrickiae* differs from *E. surgens* in having extensive rough bark, much more robust habit and linear seedling leaves. Specimens of intermediate character between *E. merrickiae* and *E. surgens* have been collected north-west of Israelite Bay.

Another anomalous species in section *Dumaria*, *E. deflexa*, has similar seeds to both *E. merrickiae* and *E. surgens* but is otherwise dissimilar being a small smooth-barked mallee with conspicuous pendulous cream buds.



## Origin of Name

*Eucalyptus merrickiae*: after Mary Merrick (1897-1981). Mary Merrick was a librarian and stenographer at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney from 1921 to c.1927. In 1933 she married Charles Taylor.

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