

NZ Myrtaceae Key - Online edition

Eucalyptus ovata Labill. var. *ovata*

Common Names

black gum, swamp gum

Origin

Australia: South Australia, eastern Tasmania, southern Victoria and southern New South Wales.

Cultivation

In New Zealand cultivated occasionally in parks, tree collections or forestry trials; a few records of naturalisation from nearby specimens.

Distribution

Occasional throughout New Zealand.

Distinguishing Features

- A tree to 20 m tall with variable bark, smooth throughout or with loose, rough, grey to grey-brown bark to variable height on trunk; smooth bark white, cream, pale grey or pink-brown.
- Adult leaves that are alternate, stalked, variable in shape from lanceolate to ovate, to 180 mm long and 50 mm wide, usually wavy, glossy, green, same colour above and below; intramarginal vein parallel to and well removed from margin, oil glands usually absent.
- Juvenile leaves almost stalkless at first but soon stalked, opposite for about 5–10 pairs then alternate, elliptic to ovate, to 85 mm long and 60 mm wide, margin scalloped or smooth, green.
- Distinctively diamond-shaped flower buds in clusters of 7, to 9 mm long and 6 mm wide, green, bud cap usually conical, occasionally rounded, flowers white.
- Fruit a stalkless or stalked woody capsule, funnel-shaped or slightly bell-shaped, to 8 mm long and 8 mm wide, disc a raised ring or level with the rim, valves 3 or 4, near rim level or projecting above the rim.

Habit

Tree to 20 m tall.

Bark and Stem/Trunk

Bark smooth throughout or with loose, rough, grey to grey-brown bark to variable height on trunk; smooth bark white, cream, pale grey or pink-brown, occasionally powdery; ribbons absent. Hairs, adventitious roots absent. Young stems rounded in cross-section.

Leaves

Adult leaves alternate, stalked, blade lanceolate to ovate, 80–180 mm long, 16–50 mm wide, usually wavy, base tapering to stalk, glossy, green, same colour above and below, hairless; side-veins at an angle greater than 45° to midrib, vein reticulation dense to very dense, intramarginal vein parallel to and well removed from margin, oil glands usually absent; leaf stalk 15–33 mm long.

Juvenile leaves almost stalkless at first but soon stalked, opposite for about 5–10 pairs then alternate, elliptic to ovate, 30–85 mm long, 25–60 mm wide, margin scalloped or smooth, earliest leaves with lobed or rounded base, later leaves tapering, slightly different in colour above and below, green.

Flowers

Flowers in clusters of 7, in leaf axils, stalk of cluster more or less round to angular, 3–14 mm long. Mature buds free, usually stalked or rarely stalkless (stalk (0–)2–4(–7) mm long), diamond-shaped (5–9 mm long, 4–6 mm wide), green, bud cap usually conical, occasionally rounded, flowers (stamens) white; in mature open flowers, petals and sepals absent. Main flowering period: winter and spring.

Fruit

Capsules woody, stalkless or stalked (stalks (0–)1–5 mm long), funnel-shaped or slightly bell-shaped, 3–8 mm long, 4–8 mm wide, disc a raised ring or level with the rim, valves 3 or 4, near rim level or projecting above the rim.

Similar Species

The diamond-shaped buds and funnel-shaped (or slightly bell-shaped) capsules in clusters of 7, of *E. ovata* var. *ovata* together with variably shaped leaves that may be wavy, quite narrow or relatively wide, and smooth bark, distinguish this species.

- *Eucalyptus cinerea* also has diamond-shaped buds but they are in 3s, the foliage is bluish grey to waxy grey-white and the bark is thick and rough on trunk and larger branches.
- *Eucalyptus ovata* var. *ovata* has some similarities to *E. brookeriana* (not included in this key) which has a stocking of rough bark, leaves differently coloured above and below, with oil glands, juvenile leaves that are round to oblong, scalloped, with oil glands and fruit which may vary from funnel-shaped to cup-shaped.

Notes

The second variety, *E. ovata* var. *grandiflora*, occurs in Australia but is not known to be present in New Zealand.

Eucalyptus is a genus of nearly 800 species, most of which are endemic to Australia, with a few species extending to parts of Malesia and as far north as the Philippines.

External Links

- [EUCLID](#)
- [Flora of Australia](#)
- [Flora of New Zealand Online](#)
- [GBIF](#)
- [iNaturalist NZ](#)
- [NZPCN](#)
- [PlantNET: New South Wales Flora Online](#)
- [Plants of South Eastern New South Wales](#)
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