

NZ Myrtaceae Key - Online edition

Eucalyptus viminalis Labill. subsp. *viminalis*

Common Names

manna gum, ribbon gum, white gum

Origin

Australia: widespread from South Australia through Victoria, Tasmania and eastern New South Wales, mostly in wetter or seasonally well-watered areas.

Cultivation

In New Zealand widely cultivated as a landscape tree of parks and gardens, and for shelter; occasionally naturalised from nearby planted specimens.

Distribution

Scattered records from throughout the North and South Islands of New Zealand.

Distinguishing Features

- A small to very tall tree to 90 m tall, with smooth white, cream or grey trunk and branches, often with a stocking of rough, fibrous, greyish bark at the base, and ribbons of partially shed bark in the crown of the tree.
- Adult leaves that are green, dull or glossy, same colour above and below, alternate, stalked, lanceolate to sickle-shaped, to 232 mm long and 30 mm wide, flat or wavy, base tapering to stalk.
- Juvenile leaves that are opposite, lanceolate, to 90 mm long and 20 mm wide, green, stalkless for many pairs, with base stem-clasping or rounded.
- Spindle-shaped to ovate buds in clusters of 3, in leaf axils, stalk of cluster angular to slightly flattened to 10 mm long, bud caps rounded to conical or narrowly pointed, to 9 mm long and 6 mm wide, flowers white.
- Fruit that are woody capsules, in clusters of 3, cup-shaped or rounded, to 8 mm long and 11 mm wide, with broad, conspicuously raised disc and 3 or 4 valves projecting above the rim.

Habit

A small to very tall tree to 90 m tall.

Bark and Stem/Trunk

Bark usually smooth over whole trunk, grey, yellowish white or pale brown, sometimes powdery, shedding to ground level in long ribbons, often with ribbons of partly shed bark retained in the tree crown, or with a thick stocking of rough, fibrous, grey, brown or black bark for 2–6 m above the base. Hairs and adventitious roots absent. Young stems rounded or square in cross-section, smooth or warty.

Leaves

Adult leaves alternate, stalked, blade lanceolate to sickle-shaped, 85–232 mm long, 8–30 mm wide, flat or wavy, base tapering to stalk; dull or glossy, green, same colour above and below, hairless; side-veins at an angle greater than 45° to midrib, vein reticulation moderate to dense, intramarginal vein parallel to and close to margin, oil glands present; leaf stalk 10–25 mm long.

Juvenile leaves opposite and stalkless for many pairs, lanceolate to oblong to sickle-shaped, 25–90 mm long, 5–20 mm wide, green, base stem-clasping or rounded.

Flowers

Flowers in clusters of 3, in leaf axils, stalk of cluster angular to slightly flattened, 4–10 mm long. Mature buds free with stalks to 5 mm long, or stalkless, ovate to spindle-shaped, 6–9 mm long, 3–6 mm wide, green to yellow, cap rounded to conical or narrowly pointed; flowers (stamens) white; in mature open flowers, petals and sepals absent. Main flowering period: summer to autumn.

Fruit

Capsules woody, on a stalk to 3 mm long or stalkless, cup-shaped or rounded, 3–8 mm long, 5–9(–11) mm wide; disc broad, raised above the capsule rim, valves strongly projecting above the rim.

Similar Species

Eucalyptus viminalis and *E. macarthurii* have similar foliage, both are likely to have some ribbons in the crown. However, the bark of the main trunk of *E. macarthurii* is always rough, whereas *E. viminalis* in most cases has a conspicuously white trunk and branches, with a short stocking of rough bark. *Eucalyptus viminalis* subsp. *viminalis* has buds and capsules in 3s, whereas *E. macarthurii* has smaller buds and capsules in 7s.

Eucalyptus dalrympleana, also occasional in New Zealand, is very similar to *E. viminalis*, but is distinguished by having orbicular to heart-shaped or oval juvenile leaves, compared with narrow-lanceolate to oblong juvenile leaves of *E. viminalis*. There are two subspecies: *E. dalrympleana* subsp. *dalrympleana* with buds in 3s and *E. dalrympleana* subsp. *heptantha* with buds usually in 7s, but occasionally with some in 3s.

Notes

Four subspecies of *E. viminalis* are described, with *E. viminalis* subsp. *viminalis* the most widespread, and by far the most common in New Zealand. *Eucalyptus viminalis* subsp. *cygnetensis*, occasional in New Zealand, differs from *E. viminalis* subsp. *viminalis* in being rough-barked to the larger limbs and usually bearing buds and capsules in 7s, but occasionally in 3s. The other subspecies present in New Zealand, but rare, is *E. viminalis* subsp. *pyroriana*, a small tree with rough bark on most of the trunk and flower buds in 3s. *Eucalyptus viminalis* subsp. *hentyensis*, reported only from a restricted area in Tasmania, has little rough bark, broad juvenile leaves and buds in 3s or 7s.

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.

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