

Trees of Mount Majura

The pattern and diversity of the trees growing on Mount Majura result from natural conditions such as variations in soils and topography, fire and drought and from human interactions such as grazing, clearing and planting. This guide contains brief descriptions of eight eucalypt species (1) and eight small tree species (2) listed in alphabetic order of the species name. Features that help to identify the plants are grouped under headings at the right hand side.

A. *Eucalyptus*. The name of the group derived from Greek *eu* meaning well, *kalyptos* meaning concealed and refers to the cap of the buds which falls away on flowering in all members of the group.

BOTANICAL NAME	<i>E. blakelyi</i>	<i>E. bridgesiana</i>	<i>E. goniocalyx</i>	<i>E. mannifera</i>	<i>E. melliodora</i>	<i>E. pauciflora</i>	<i>E. polyanthemos</i>	<i>E. rossii</i>
COMMON NAME	Blakely's Red Gum	Apple Box	Bundy, Long-leaved Box	Brittle Gum	Yellow Box	Snow Gum	Red Box	Scribbly Gum
FAMILY	Myrtaceae (Myrtle family)	Myrtaceae	Myrtaceae	Myrtaceae	Myrtaceae	Myrtaceae	Myrtaceae	Myrtaceae
SPECIES NAMING	after botanist Blakely	after Bridges	angled calyx (1)	manna-bearing (2)	honey-scented	few-flowered	many-flowered	after Ross
GROWTH HABIT	10-25m tall spreading tree	to 20m, large often gnarled branches, spreading crown	small low-branching tree to 15m with short trunk	to 20m with erect trunk & drooping foliage	large tree to 30m tall with spreading crown;	10-20m tall with erect trunk	7-20m, crooked on poor sites, distinct greyish crown	to 8-15m tall, crooked growth at poor sites
BARK	smooth gum bark with white, grey or reddish streaks shedding in long flakes	grey scaly-flaky or tessellate box bark up to smooth-barked small branches	grey-brown coarsely flaky box bark up to small branches, sometimes blocky & deeply fissured at base	smooth white grey mottled, powdery or reddish before shedding; no pressure ridges or wrinkles; scribbles (3) concealed by bark	scaly or fibrous box bark to varying height merging into smooth often wavy creamy-white & grey streaked gum-like bark	smooth white or creamy bark, sometimes with grey streaks & scribbles	variable, grey to light brown fine box bark to varying height, sometimes smooth from the base, smooth bark blotched creamy-white grey	smooth grey, cream or white bark with clear sharp-edged scribbles (3); pressure ridges where branches join or bent
LEAVES	adult: stalked, alternate, lance-shaped; juvenile: egg-shaped, large & thick; leaves often with lerps (4)	adult: stalked, alternate, lance-shaped; juvenile: alternate heart-shaped with a finely wavy edge, glaucous (5)	adult: stalked, alternate, lance-shaped, to 24cm long; juvenile: stalkless, opposite, heart-shaped, glaucous	adult: stalked, alternate, narrow lance-shaped, grey-green; juvenile: opposite to alternate, elliptic	adult: stalked, alternate, lance-shaped, appear 3-veined at base; juvenile: stalked, alternate, elliptic	adult: stalked, alternate, lance-shaped with almost parallel veins, thick, leathery, juvenile: egg-shaped, large	adult: long-stalked, alternate egg-shaped, blue-green; juvenile: long-stalked, alternate round with notched end	adult: stalked, alternate, narrow lance-shaped, grey-green; juvenile: opposite to alternate, broad lance-shaped
BUDS	umbel (6) of 5-10 buds with long conical caps	umbel of usually 7 buds with short-pointed caps	umbel of 5-7 stalkless stout buds	umbel of 4 to max. 7 buds with short pointed caps	rather long-stalked umbel with 5-7 short-capped buds	umbel of 7-12 club-shaped buds with short pointed caps	clustered umbels of 3-7 buds with short conical caps	umbel of 5-12 usually more than 7 club-shaped buds
FRUITS	cup-shaped nuts (7) with domed top & sharply projecting valves (8)	cup-shaped nuts with 3-4 protruding valves	stalkless, barrel- or cup-shaped nuts with flat top & slightly protruding valves	nuts with domed top & 3-4 small protruding valves	distinctly stalked small pear-shaped nuts with flat top & sunken valves	large pear-shaped nuts to 9mm long with flat top & small non-protruding valves	pear-shaped nuts with sunken tops & non-projecting valves	nuts with flat top & small non-projecting valves
OCCURRENCE HABITAT	lower slopes & plains in deeper soils; often with Yellow Box; remnant in largely cleared areas	open woodland, forest on lower slopes, in deeper soils, along gullies, mid slopes with cooler aspect	dry hills & ridges on shallow rocky soils	dry hill slopes, sunny aspects, poor soils, often with <i>E. rossii</i> , but prefers deeper soils of foot slopes	woodland to open forest on undulating land & adjacent wooded slopes; often with <i>E. blakelyi</i> ; largely cleared	frost hollows & cooler slopes	gentle slopes to rocky ridges in dry open forest	dry woodland & open forest on exposed ridges, sunny slopes, on shallow rocky soil
WHERE TO SEE EXAMPLES	north west slopes; horse paddocks; near Mackenzie St nature park entrance	around lower water reservoir; south-east slopes along Casuarina trail	drainage line above horse paddocks along Casuarina trail up to near summit	south-west slopes close to saddle, horse paddocks	lower slopes, around water reservoir behind Rivett St, horse paddocks	close to summit adjacent to summit trail	south of track from Kellaway St nature park entrance	steep west slopes, ridge
NOTES	dominant tree of endangered ecological community Yellow Box - Blakely's Red Gum grassy woodland (YBBRG); plants often show dieback caused by insect attack	frequent associate of YBBRG; timber of little value - the likely reason for frequent occurrence of this species	uncommon in the ACT; Mar-Apr 05: visit of up to 70 endangered Swift Parrots attracted by prolific Bundy blossom	multi-stemmed growth of trees in paddock due to re-sprout after fire or drought in the past, several with nesting hollows	dominant tree of YBBRG; invaluable habitat tree, excellent honey producer & excellent timber		generally absent at Mt Majura except Majura Ainslie saddle; excellent timber used for fence posts & firewood in the past	drought susceptible, re-sprout from dormant buds in spring 2005

Glossary

(1) calyx: collective name of sepals, which form the outer whorl of flowers

(2) manna: refers to sweet exudate of insects feeding on plant

(3) scribbles: zigzag shaped food galleries of moth larvae feeding in the bark of smooth barked eucalypts

(4) lerp: small scallop-shaped protective shield produced by sap-sucking insects (psyllids)

(5) glaucous: covered with a white coat, which gives the part of the plant a blue-green or silvery appearance

(6) umbel: a group of flowers arising from a common point; flower arrangement in most eucalypts

(7) fruits of eucalypts are capsules, often referred to as gum 'nuts'

(8) valves: the top parts of a gum nut that split to release the seeds

References

National Parks Association of the ACT(1983) Field Guide to the Native Trees of the ACT
Leon Costermans (1994) Native trees and shrubs of south-east Australia. New Holland Publishers, Sydney.

Material of interest

A.C.T. Parks and Conservation Services: A guide to eucalypts in the Australian Capital Territory
Laurance G Adams (2005) Trees and shrubs of Black Mountain, Mt. Ainslie and Mt. Majura. A key based on vegetative characteristics

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