

# *Eucalyptus malacoxylon*

## Moonbi apple box

### Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Maidenaria | Euryotae | Bridgesiana

### Nomenclature

***Eucalyptus malacoxylon*** Blakely, *Key Eucalypts* 145 (1934).



*Eucalyptus stuartiana* var. *grossa* Maiden, *Crit. Revis. Eucalyptus* 3: 69 (1917). T: New South Wales: Hanging Rock, Nundle, *J.H. Maiden & J.L. Boorman s.n.*, June 1906; lectotype: (NSW41833; isolecto A, CANB, K) *vide* Bean, A.R., *Telopea* 12(4): 472 (2010).

*Eucalyptus bridgesiana* subsp. *malacoxylon* (Blakely) N.C.W. Beadle, illustration in *Stud. Fl. N.E. New South Wales* 3: 461 (1976). [nom. inval.]

### Description

**Tree** to 20 m tall.

**Bark** rough on trunk and branches to ca 5–8 cm diameter, tessellated or box-type, thick, grey.

**Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm):** stem rounded or square in cross-section, glaucous, warty or smooth; juvenile leaves sessile to subsessile for 2 or 3 nodes then shortly petiolate, opposite for at least 18 nodes, cordate, orbicular or ovate, 4–7 cm long, 3–7 cm wide, margin entire or crenulate, base lobed, apex rounded, grey-green to glaucous.

**Adult leaves** alternate, petiole 2–5 cm long; blade lanceolate to falcate, 9–30 cm long, 2–4 cm wide, base tapering to petiole, concolorous, glossy, green, side-veins greater than 45° to midrib, densely reticulate, intramarginal vein parallel to and remote from margin, oil glands island, intersectional or obscure.

**Inflorescence** axillary unbranched, peduncles 1–1.7 cm long, buds 7 per umbel, pedicels 0.2–0.6 cm long. **Mature buds** diamond-shaped with narrow medial encircling flange, ca 0.6 cm long, ca 0.5 cm wide, glaucous, scar present, operculum conical, stamens irregularly flexed, anthers cuboid or cuneate, versatile, dorsifixed, dehiscing by longitudinal slits (non-confluent), style long, stigma tapered, locules 3 or 4, the placentae each with 4 vertical ovule rows. Flowers white.

**Fruit** pedicellate, rarely sessile (pedicels 0–0.5 cm long), cup-shaped, obconical or hemispherical, 0.4–0.7 cm long, 0.7–1 cm wide, glaucous or non-glaucous, disc raised convex or annular, or disc slightly descending, valves 3 or 4, exserted or near rim level.

**Seeds** black or brown, 1.5–2.5 mm long, ovoid or flattened-ovoid, often pointed at one end, usually lacunose, dorsal surface shallowly pitted, hilum ventral.

**Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10):** cotyledons bilobed; stems square in cross-section, glaucous, warty; leaves opposite for many nodes, sessile or shortly petiolate, cordate to orbicular, 4.5–7 cm long, 4–7 cm wide, base amplexicaul to lobed, margin crenulate or entire, apex rounded to broadly pointed, usually glaucous, rarely green.

### Flowering Time

Flowering time not recorded.

### Notes

A small to medium-sized tree of very restricted distribution at the southern end of the Northern Tablelands of New South Wales north of Tamworth in the Moonbi, Bendemeer and Nundle areas, usually on granite hills. It is rough-barked and has orbicular to cordate to broadly ovate, glaucous juvenile leaves and glaucous buds and fruits. The operculum slightly overlaps the top of the hypanthium forming a flange. *E. malacoxylon* belongs to the apple boxes, being closest to *E. bridgesiana* with differences outlined below.

*Eucalyptus malacoxylon* belongs in *Eucalyptus* subgenus *Symphyomyrtus* section *Maidenaria*, a large group of species more or less restricted to south-eastern Australia, characterised by bilobed cotyledons, simple axillary inflorescences, buds with two opercula, stamens with versatile anthers and flattened seeds with a ventral hilum. Within this section, *E. malacoxylon* belongs in series *Bridgesianae* having rough bark, ovate, crenulate juvenile leaves opposite for many nodes, ovoid buds in sevens, and fruit with exserted valves. The other species



in series *Bridgesianae* are *E. angophoroides*, a rough-barked tree of better quality sites in south coastal New South Wales and East Gippsland in Victoria, with slightly discoloured adult leaves and green juvenile leaves; *E. bridgesiana*, a rough-barked tree widespread in eastern New South Wales and Victoria, with concolorous adult leaves and sub-opposite to alternate, glaucous, juvenile leaves and non-glaucous buds and fruit; and *E. dunnii*, a tall forest tree of subcoastal hills and ranges of northern New South Wales, which is only rough at the base, smooth-barked above and has green juvenile leaves.

### Origin of Name

*Eucalyptus malacoxylon*: Greek *malacos*-, soft and *xylon*, wood.

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