

# *Eucalyptus percostata*

## Devil's Peak mallee

### Classification

Eucalyptus | Symphyomyrtus | Dumaria | Rufispermae

### Nomenclature

***Eucalyptus percostata*** Brooker & P.J.Lang, *J. Adelaide Bot. Gard.* 13: 65 (1990).



T: track east of Devils Peak, south of Quorn, South Australia, 25 May 1986,  
*M.I.H.Brooker 9326 & D.Kleinig*; holotype: AD; isotype: CANB, NSW.

### Description

**Mallee** to 10 m tall. Forming a lignotuber.

**Bark** smooth, white, grey or coppery.

**Branchlets** have oil glands in the pith.

**Juvenile growth (coppice or field seedlings to 50 cm):** stems square in cross-section, smooth or slightly warty; juvenile leaves always petiolate, opposite until node 3 to 5, broadly ovate to broadly lanceolate, 5–10 cm long, 3–6 cm wide, base tapering to petiole or rounded, dull and green above; growing tip conspicuously waxy but this is soon lost as leaves expand.

**Adult leaves** alternate, petiole 1–2.2 cm long; blade lanceolate, 7–12 cm long, 1.2–2.5 cm wide, base tapering to petiole, concolorous, dull, green to blue-grey, rarely glaucous, side-veins greater than 45° to midrib, densely reticulate with erose veinlets, intramarginal vein parallel to and just within margin, oil glands mostly intersectional or obscure.

**Inflorescence** axillary unbranched, peduncles 0.8–2 cm long, buds 7, shortly pedicellate, rarely sessile, pedicels (0)0.1–0.2 cm long.

**Mature buds** pyriform (0.8–1.2 cm long, 0.6–0.7 cm wide), non-glaucous, slightly ribbed longitudinally on hypanthium, scar present, operculum rounded to conical (0.4–0.6 cm long), wider than hypanthium and conspicuously ribbed, stamens inflexed, anthers cuboid to wedge-shaped, versatile, dorsifixed, dehiscent by longitudinal slits (non-confluent), style long, stigma tapered, locules 3 to 5, the placentae each with 4 vertical ovule rows. Flowers white.

**Fruit** usually shortly pedicellate, pedicels (0)0.1–0.3 cm long, cup-shaped to obconical, 0.6–0.8 cm long, 0.5–0.9 cm wide, usually slightly ribbed longitudinally, disc descending, valves 3 to 5, near rim level.

**Seeds** reddish brown and glossy, 1.5–2.3 mm long, depressed-ovoid, dorsal surface shallowly pitted, hilum ventral.

**Cultivated seedlings (measured at ca node 10):** cotyledons reniform; stems square in cross-section; leaves always petiolate, opposite for 3 to 5 nodes then alternate, ovate, 5–8.5 cm long, 3–5.5 cm wide, base rounded to tapering, dull, green to bluish green sometimes with slight waxy bloom.

### Flowering Time

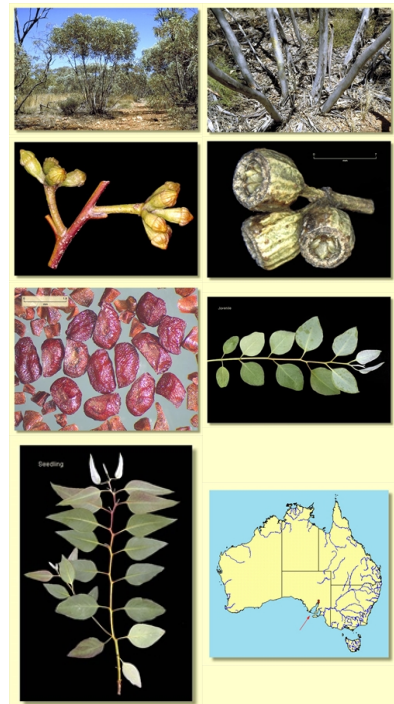
Flowering has been recorded in September and November.

### Notes

A mallee endemic to South Australia and known from only a few localities in the southern Flinders Range, viz. Telowie Gorge, Alligator Gorge and east of Devils Peak. *Eucalyptus percostata* occurs on hills and slopes on loamy soils. It has slender, smooth-barked stems, dull green to greyish leaves and is non-glaucous.

In the classification of Brooker (2000) *Eucalyptus percostata* belongs in *Eucalyptus* subgenus *Symphyomyrtus* section *Dumaria* having these features: buds initially with two opercula the outer shed early, stamens strongly inflexed, ovules in 4 rows on the placentae and cotyledons reniform. Within section *Dumaria* the species belongs to a large sub-group of closely related species (series *Rufispermae*, 37 described species and subspecies) diagnosed by glandular pith in the branchlets, anthers cuboid to wedge-shaped, versatile, and by the reddish brown and glossy, flattish seeds which are unique to the series.

In its natural distribution *E. percostata* has coarser, more ribbed buds and fruit than the widespread mallee *E. dumosa*. Immediately to the west of the distribution of *E. percostata*, on the Eyre Peninsula, there are four closely related species: *E. calcareana*, *E. pileata* and *E. phenax* subsp. *phenax*, which are smooth-barked small trees or mallees with glossy green leaves; and *E. cretata*, which is strongly glaucous on branchlets, leaves and buds. To the east of the natural occurrence of *E. percostata* in the area loosely defined as the Murray Mallee another related species, *E. cyanophylla*, is found between Renmark (South Australia) and Morkalla to Murrayville (Victoria). It occurs on



flattish sandy sites and has much greyer appearance with coarser leaves than *E. percostata*.

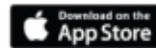
At Devils Peak *E. percostata* hybridizes with the mallee-box *E. odorata* producing smooth-barked mallees that have informally been called *E. desquamata*, this name never having been published.

### Origin of Name

*Eucalyptus percostata*: Latin *percostatus*, conspicuously ribbed, referring to the opercula.

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