

Eucalyptus pleurocarpa

blue mallee, tallerack

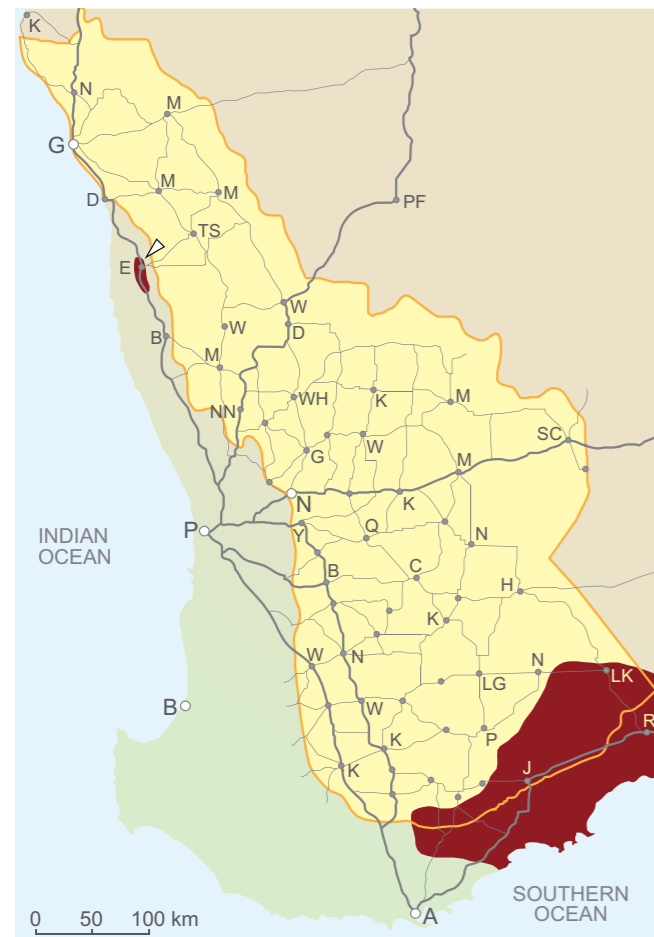
Name: Greek, *pleura*, rib, side and *carpos*, fruit, in reference to the ribs on the side of the fruits. Blue mallee refers to the its bluish crown of leaves. Tallerack is the aboriginal name.

Authority: *Eucalyptus pleurocarpa* Schauer, in Lehm., *Preiss.* 1: 132 (1844). Type: Cape Riche, W.A., Nov. 1840, L.Preiss 253.

Synonym: Previously known as *E. tetragona*. It is now recognised that the type specimen of *E. tetragona* is representative of an intergrade between *E. pleurocarpa* and *E. extrica* and is therefore not representative of either of these two species.

Features: Resprouter, lignotuber present. Multi-stemmed. Straggly, spreading, open habit. Seedling leaves hairy. Leaves on mature plant broad, rounded, grey-blue. White powdery bloom (wax) on branchlets, leaves, buds and fruits. Buds and fruits in groups of three. Four prominent teeth-like sepals on the rim of the bud base. Flowers white, stamens in four bundles. Fruits woody, ribbed.

Distribution & Habitat: A common sandplain mallee of the southern wheatbelt and adjacent southern coastal and sub-coastal plains, including the Stirling Range. Extends eastwards to the Lake King region and beyond Esperance. Interestingly,



Eucalyptus subg. *Eudesmia*
sect. *Limbatae* ser. *Heteropterae*

disjunct populations are found on the northern sandplain in the Eneabba to Badgingarra region. Occurs in grey to white sands, often with gravel. Often emergent in shrubby heath country and conspicuous due to its straggly habit and large, blue-grey leaves. Associated eucalypts include *E. decipiens*, *E. ecostata*, *E. falcata*, *E. hebetifolia*, *E. incrassata*, *E. leptocalyx*, *E. perangusta*, *E. phaenophylla*, *E. thamnoides*, *E. uncinata*, *E. vegrandis* subsp. *vegrandis* and *recondita*, and *E. wandoo* subsp. *wandoo*.

Uses: *Eucalyptus pleurocarpa* is a distinctive plant and is cultivated for use in floristry and as an ornamental species for parks and gardens, across the southern states of Australia. The species grows quickly in cultivation and recovers rapidly from wildfire, re-sprouting prolifically from the lignotuber and normally flowering in its third year. Recommended for inclusion in all sandplain plantings.

Notes: The crown of *E. pleurocarpa* is made up of juvenile leaves which are retained throughout the life of the plant, a feature that is uncommon in the eucalypts and only seen in *E. crucis* subsp. *crucis*, *E. kruseana*, *E. macrocarpa* and *E. rhodantha* in south-west W.A.

Eucalyptus extrica (eastern tallerack) occurs to the east of Condingup on the Esperance Plains and although it has a very similar habit to *E. pleurocarpa*, it differs distinctly by its longer, narrower leaves, which are green and non-glaucous, and by the non-glaucous buds and fruits (shorter, broader, blue-grey, glaucous leaves, and glaucous buds and fruits in *E. pleurocarpa*).

The closely related *E. conveniens* (Natta Road mallee), from the northern wheatbelt, is morphologically intermediate between *E. pleurocarpa* and *E. gittinsii* subsp. *illucida*. *Eucalyptus conveniens* occurs north and east of the northern sandplain populations of *E. pleurocarpa* and is easily confused with the latter, however it is distinguished primarily by its narrower, broad lanceolate, grey-green leaves with longer petioles (15–25 mm long).

Eucalyptus gittinsii subsp. *illucida* (northern sandplain mallee) is distinguished from *E. pleurocarpa* by its lanceolate, blue-green non-glaucous leaves and non-glaucous adult parts (elliptical, blue-grey, glaucous leaves and glaucous adult parts in *E. pleurocarpa*).



Lake Magenta Road, south-east of Newdegate



Painted seedling
courtesy of
Ian Roberts.



Description: *Mallee*, to 6 metres tall, lignotuberous. Spreading, open habit. **Bark** smooth, grey to creamy tan or beige, shed in ribbons. Aged plants (rarely seen) often have rough, thin bark, persistent on the stems. **Branchlets** glaucous, pith glands present. **Seedling** stems and leaves hairy. **Juvenile leaves** elliptical to ovate, 70–150 mm long x 25–70 mm wide, dull, grey-green to bluish grey, glaucous, petiolate (10–20 mm long), maintained in the mature crown throughout the life of the plant. **Branchlets** glaucous, square in cross-section. **Umbels** 3-flowered, held on flattened peduncles, 5–15 mm long. **Buds** glaucous, clavate, 7–10 mm long x 5–7 mm wide, square in cross-section, pedicels 4–10 mm long, 4 teeth-like sepals at the top edge of the hypanthium. **Opercula** single, no scar, hemispherical to pyramidal. **Flowers** white, occurring in summer, stamens in 4 bundles. **Fruits** glaucous, cupular to globose to barrel-shaped, 12–25 mm long x to 22 mm wide, square in cross-section, with 4 protruding longitudinal ribs, disc descending, valves 4 or 5, enclosed. **Seeds** dark brownish to black.