

Sydney Blue Gum - *Eucalyptus saligna*



Eucalyptus saligna is generally found within 120km of the coastline in its range from just south of Batemans Bay (Mogo State Forests) to Maryborough in central Queensland. It is also found in disjunct populations in central Queensland; Eungella National Park, Kroombit Tops, Consuelo Tableland, Blackdown Tableland and Carnarvon Gorge.

It grows in tall forests in more sheltered areas, on clay or loam soils, and alluvial sands.

It is known to hybridise with Bangalay (*E. botryoides*) particularly in its southern range. It is speculated that it also hybridise with Flooded Gum (*E. grandis*) and they share a similar geographic range.

It is a plantation species in South America and South Africa. In Brazil it is also deliberately hybridised with River Red Gum (*E. [camaldulensis](#)*) to produce fast growing high quality timber.

Only small areas of the upper Hunter Valley do the natural range of Sydney Blue Gum and River Red Gum overlap.

On favourable sites Sydney Blue Gum is capable of rapid early growth. The species is frost tolerant, moderately drought tolerant and considered slightly salt tolerant.

Sydney blue gum was described by English naturalist James Edward Smith in 1797, and still bears its original name. The species name *saligna* refers to some likeness to a willow, though what attribute this is unclear. Its two closest relatives are the Flooded Gum (*E. grandis*) and the Mountain Blue Gum (*E. deanei*).

Description



Leaves



Flowers



Buds



Fruits

Sydney blue gum grows as a straight and tall forest tree to heights of 30 to 55m, occasionally 65m with a large trunk up to 2.5m in diameter. The trunk has smooth pale grey or white bark with a long (1 to 4 m high) stocking of rough brownish bark at the base. The dark green leaves are arranged alternately along the stems and are 10–17cm long by 2–3cm in width. The white

flowers appear from December to February, and are arranged in groups of seven to eleven in umbellasters.

Ecology

Its lifespan is average for eucalyptus, over 200 years plus. It is a moderate to high seed producer, producing 5,000 viable seed per 10 grams. However, seed needs to fall into disturbed ground or bare ground to germinate.

Sydney blue gum readily regenerates after bushfire from epicormic buds on the trunk and lower branches. Bushfires also provide the ground conditions for seed germination.

It is highly susceptible to Bell Miner Associated dieback (BMAD). The presence of the territorial and aggressive bell miner (*Manorina melanophrys*) and psyllid insects is correlated with dieback of the canopy of *E. saligna*, though the exact mechanism remains unclear however there is a strong correlation with the presences of BMAD and dense understorey. Areas that are grazed or have regular hazard reduction burning have little evidence of BMAD.

Uses and Timber Description

Heart wood is dark pink to red-brown, Sapwood usually paler and readily distinguished, Texture moderately coarse and even. Straight grained or slightly interlocked. Gum veins are common. East to dry but tangential surfaces subject to checking. Need care in drying to minimize particular for backsawn timber. Quarter sawn timber has fewer issues. Green timber density is 1100 to 1200kg/m³ and dried weights of 850 to 900kg/m³.



Shrinkage about 5% radial and 9% tangential
Heartwood is moderately durable but the sapwood susceptible to lyctid borer attack.
Easy to work, used in general building, poles and small girders, flooring, furniture, cladding, veneer, paneling and boat building

