

SOME ORNAMENTAL EUCALYPTS FOR DRY AREAS

NATALIE F. PEATE

Meyer Nurseries
Victoria, Australia

In Australia, the genus *Eucalyptus* covers some 500 species many of which are suitable for ornamental planting. Some features considered in selecting ornamental species are suitability for conditions in the area of planting, habit, foliage, bark, flowers and sometimes fruit.

Eucalypts fall into two main groups; shrubs and trees. The shrubby species, ranging from about 4 to 20 ft in height, frequently have enlarged rootstocks, called lignotubers, from which several stems usually grow. These eucalypts are known as mallees and comprise the highest proportion of the most floriferous and beautiful species in the genus. Other shrubs and trees have either poorly developed or no lignotubers and are generally single trunked. Many of these are also highly ornamental.

A high proportion of ornamental eucalypts come from a small area in western Australia known as the "Goldfields Area." A brief description of ten of these species has been tabulated below with information taken from "Eucalypts of the Western Australian Goldfields (and the adjacent wheatbelt)" by G. M. Chippendale.

Propagation is by seed as vegetative means have proved difficult. In our nursery we are setting up a programme to investigate propagation from cuttings. This is being done in an attempt to reproduce hybrids which combine the aesthetic qualities of one species with the hardiness of another, species for which seed does not germinate readily, species for which seed does not reproduce uniformly, and species for which seed is not readily available.

We have carried out an initial crude experiment on *E. sideroxy-lon*. Cuttings were taken from around the lignotuber of an 18 mon. old plant dipped in medium strength IBA powder and placed in a peat/polystyrene (ratio 1:3) medium, under intermittent mist with no bottom heat. Within 3 weeks 70% of the cuttings had rooted, and all of these have developed well.

Further information on sources of Australian plant seed or available information can be obtained from the author.

Table 1. Characteristics of ten eucalypts.

Species	Habit	Ht.,ft.	Habitat rain inches	Flower colour ^x	Flower time	Resistance to: ^y drought frost		Special sites suited
<i>E. eremophila</i>	tree/ mallee	8-20	8-20	cr, yel pk, crim	winter spring	yes	yes	coast, dry
<i>E. erythrocorys</i>	tree/ mallee	9-25	19	yel	autumn	yes	mod.	coast
<i>E. ficifolia</i>	tree	30	35+	red, pk or, cr	summer	mod.	tender when young	coast
<i>E. forrestiana</i>	tree/ mallee	15	13-16	yel	summer	yes	yes	salty, coast, dry
<i>E. macrandra</i>	tree/ mallee	9-20	15-30	yel, green	summer	yes	mod.	salty, dry
<i>E. macrocarpa</i>	mallee	4-8	15-20	crim, pk	spring early summer	yes	mod.	sandy
<i>E. platypus</i>	tree/ mallee	9-25	15-37	yel- green	mid- summer	yes	mod.	salty, coast, dry
<i>E. rhodantha</i>	mallee	7-10	15-20	red	summer	yes	mod.	
<i>E. salubris</i>	tree	45	8-15	cr	summer	yes	yes	dry
<i>E. sepulcralis</i>	tree/ mallee	25	17-20	yel	summer	mod.	yes	coast

^xFlower Colour: Cr=cream, crim=crimson, yel=yellow, or=orange, pk=pink.

^yResistance: Mod.=moderately.