

How to identify Eucalypts

Eucalypts vary widely in form and sometimes hybridise. As such, identifying them requires careful attention to overall tree size, buds, fruit, leaves, bark, flowers and habit (e.g. weeping, tall and upright or shrub like). As you walk among the eucalypts of Port Melbourne, take time to observe these features.

The name eucalypt comes from the Greek words, eu meaning 'well' and kalyptos meaning covered. Most eucalypts – except Angophora species – are identified by their distinctive bud caps that pop off when the plant flowers.

Gumnuts

The fruits of the eucalypt tree are commonly called gumnuts, and they vary enormously. The distinctive size and shapes of gumnuts provide great clues when you're identifying a eucalypt.

Leaves

Eucalypt leaves are often leathery and adapted to conserve moisture. Juvenile leaves can look dramatically different from adult leaves, and leaf arrangement can help with identification.

Bark

Bark is one of the most striking and varied features of eucalypts. It can be smooth, rough, stringy, fibrous or flaky. Some bark persists year round and other types shed annually – sometimes revealing spectacular colours.

Inflorescence (Flowers)

An inflorescence is a single group of flowers. Several aspects of the inflorescence can help with species identification:

- the number of buds or flowers in each inflorescence
- where its located (for example at the end of a stem or in a leaf axil)
- the length and shape of the stalk of an inflorescence (the peduncle).

Where Eucalypts come from

Most eucalypt species evolved in small, localised areas shaped by variable rainfall, nutrient-poor soils and fire. Fire is a powerful force in eucalypt ecology. Some species regenerate only from seed and are vulnerable to frequent fires. Other species re-shoot from dormant buds beneath their bark or from underground structures (lignotubers). These allow recovery after fire or cutting.

Eucalypts grow almost everywhere in the country. Yet only a few species, such as the iconic River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), occur naturally across most of Australia. Other species – like the brilliant Red Flowering Gum (*Corymbia ficifolia*) are planted in cities across the country, far outside their natural range. They originate from south-west Western Australia.

Some of the trees you will observe on the walk are from other parts of Australia, for example:

- Sydney Red Gum (*Angophora costata*) is from sandy soils near the New South Wales Coast.
- Risdon Peppermint (*Eucalyptus risdonii*) is from the Greater Hobart area.
- Silver Princess (*Eucalyptus caesia*) is from granite outcrops east and northeast of Perth.

For more information:

Urban Forest Team

✉ greening@portphillip.vic.gov.au

☎ 03 9209 6777

proudly portphillip.vic.gov.au



Eucalypts of Port Melbourne



Trees and other plants cool the air, provide homes for wildlife and so much more. They're essential for our wellbeing and they make our City beautiful. Our urban forest includes all the trees, shrubs, and groundcovers on both public and private land – and eucalypts play an especially important role in this mix. They're well adapted to Australian conditions, fast growing and support biodiversity.

No continent on Earth is as dominated by a single group of trees as Australia is by eucalypts. They are a defining feature of our landscape. For tens of thousands of years, Aboriginal people have used and cared for eucalypts. They are deeply significant cultural plants. In urban areas, mature eucalypts can also provide both food and shelter for wildlife and help cool the city. The City of Port Phillip is home to a wide range of eucalypt species and many of these can be viewed on a short walk in Port Melbourne.

The word eucalypt is a broad term covering three genera of plants: Eucalyptus, Corymbia and Angophora. While often called 'gum trees', eucalypts take many forms – from knee-high shrubs and multi-stemmed mallees to towering forest giants.

Eucalypts are an extraordinary story of adaptation. There are around 1,000 species and subspecies, with only four occurring naturally outside Australia.

Instructions for the walk

1. Begin walk at the Fishermans Bend Community Centre (corner Dunstan Parade and Centre Avenue, Garden City).
2. Turn right on to Howe Parade – and walk along the path in the centre of the median.
3. Turn right along Rosney Street, then left along Barak Road.
4. Turn right back onto Howe Parade, crossing Beacon Road into Garden City Reserve, walk through the Reserve to Swallow Street.
5. At each stop on the map take time to observe the Eucalypt gumnuts, leaves, bark and flowers.

Identifying the Eucalypts of Port Melbourne

Each of the trees on this walk has distinctive features that can assist in identification of the species.

Fishermans Bend Community Centre

- A Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata*):**
A large tree with smooth bark that sheds in small plates giving it a spotted appearance.
- B Red Flowering Gum (*Corymbia ficifolia*):**
A small to medium sized tree with massive floral displays in summer. The large gumnuts are shaped like an urn.

Walking path along the centre median of Howe Parade

- C Sydney Red Gum (*Angophora costata*):**
The gumnuts are ribbed and the bark sheds in plates creating fabulous colours. The leaves of this tree grow in opposite pairs.
- D Yellow Gum (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*):**
A medium sized tree, the bark has a yellow tone and its flowers are red-pink.

Cyril Letts Reserve playground

- E Red Flowering Gum (*Corymbia ficifolia*):**
A small to medium sized tree with massive floral displays in summer. The large gum nuts are shaped like an urn.
- F Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*):**
A large tree, with relatively large waxy leaves and knobby gumnuts that have waxy (glaucous) substance on them, acting as UV protection.
- G Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata*):**
A large tree with smooth bark that sheds in small plates giving it a spotted appearance.

Barak Road (nature strip)

- H Risdon Peppermint (*Eucalyptus risdonii*):**
The leaves appear to be attached directly to the branch and grow in opposite pairs. They are covered in a white waxlike substance. Notice how one of the trees has been completely coppiced and new shoots have sprung out of the lignotuber at the bottom.

Garden City Reserve

- I Silver Princess (*Eucalyptus caesia*):**
A small tree with a weeping habit and Minni ritchi (curly bark) that peels vertically. It has large silver bell shaped gumnuts and glorious crimson flowers. This is a favourite of the lorikeets.
- J Lemon Scented Gum (*Corymbia citriodora*):**
A large tree with smooth bark. When crushed the leaves have a distinctly lemon scent.
- K Iron Bark (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*):**
The dark, almost black bark is ridged and very tough. Leaves are grey green in colour, and the thin branches are red, providing the new shoots UV protection.



- Fishermans Bend Community Centre
- Toilets
- Public transport – bus stop
- Public transport – light rail stop
- Eucalypts
- Trail
- Roads