

Blackbutt eucalyptus

Eucalyptus pilularis Sm.

Myrtle family (Myrtaceae)

Post-Cook introduction

A large tree 120–180 ft (37–55 m) high. Trunk 2–4 ft (0.6–1.2 m) in diameter, straight and half to two-thirds of total height. Crown spreading and open. Bark gray brown or light gray, thick, rough, finely and deeply furrowed, fibrous, persistent on trunk only, partly shedding in strips on upper stem and branches and leaving a smooth white or yellow gray surface; branches smooth, whitish gray. Twigs slender, angled, pinkish.

Leaves alternate, with leafstalks of $\frac{1}{2}$ –1 inch (13–25 mm). Blades lance-shaped, 3–5 inches (7.5–13 cm) long and $\frac{3}{4}$ –1½ inches (2–4 cm) wide, often slightly curved, long-pointed at apex, base short-pointed and often with sides unequal, slightly thickened, shiny dark green on upper surface, paler beneath, with moderately distinct, fine straight side veins. Juvenile leaves opposite for several pairs, then alternate, stalkless or very short-stalked, oblong to narrowly lance-shaped, 1½–3 inches (4–7.5 cm) long and $\frac{1}{2}$ –1½ inches (1.3–4 cm) wide, green above, purplish beneath.

Flower clusters (umbels) at leaf base 1 inch (2.5 cm) long, including angled or flattened stalk. Flowers 6–12, about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (13 mm) across the many spreading white stamens. Buds on short stalk of $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (3 mm), half-round or egg-shaped, about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (10 mm) long and $\frac{3}{16}$ inch (5 mm) wide, with conical base and sharply conical lid of equal length.

Seed capsules short-stalked, half-round or eggshaped, $\frac{3}{8}$ –½ inch (110–13 mm) in diameter, with flat or slightly sunken disk and 3–4 small valves enclosed or at rim.

Heartwood a pale brown similar to oak, hard, strong, very stiff and tough except when brittleheart, of moderate to good durability; moderately heavy (sp. gr. 0.66). Usually straight grained and readily worked. Has a large shrinkage in drying but less growth stress manufacturing problems than *E. robusta* or *E. saligna*.

One of the most important hardwoods of Australia. Used there for general and house construction and thought not highly durable, also for poles, posts, and railroad crossties. In Hawaii, used for flooring, truck beds, paneling, refuse flumes, irrigation canal stakes, and pallets.

The tree was introduced in 1911 and first planted in an experimental area in Nuuanu Valley, Oahu. Although it has been planted on all islands, Oahu has the most timber (2.5 million board feet). The Division of Forestry has planted more than 120,000 trees. Most of the blackbutt eucalyptus has been planted in drier areas, where it attains a height of about 100 ft (30 m). In areas with about 100 inches (2,540 mm) rainfall, it grows to a great size, 180 ft (55 m), very rapidly. It has not grown well in very wet areas.

Special areas

Aiea, Pepeekeo

Champion

Height 113 ft (34.4 m), c.b.h. 9.9 ft (3.0 m), spread 45 ft (13.7 m). Hilo Forest Reserve, Hawaii (1974).

Range

Coastal Northern New South Wales and southern Queensland, Australia. Frequently in pure stands or with other eucalypts on well-drained sites, commonly sandy loam soil.

Other common name

blackbutt (Hawaii, Australia)

The common name refers to the bases of the trunks commonly blackened by frequent fires in the native forest. The scientific name, “resembling a little pill,” describes the rounded seed capsules.



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Twig with flowers and fruits, twig with
juvenile leaves (behind), 1 X (Mueller).