

## Red-ironbark eucalyptus

*Eucalyptus sideroxylon* A. Cunn. ex Woolls

Myrtle family (Myrtaceae)

Post-Cook introduction

Characterized by blackish or dark brown bark, very thick, deeply furrowed and ridged, and by the leaves dull gray green on both surfaces. Flowers clustered and bending down on curved stalks at leaf base, sometimes pink or reddish instead of white. Crushed foliage very aromatic, with odor like camphor.

Where native, a large tree 70–100 ft (21–30 m) high. Trunk 2½–4 ft (0.8–1.2 m) in diameter, straight, usually less than half of total height. Crown irregular. Bark blackish or dark brown, very thick, hard, deeply furrowed into long narrow irregular rough ridges, containing eucalyptus gum or kino. Outer dead bark light brown, slightly corky, inner bark reddish. Branches smooth and light gray. Twigs very slender, yellow green, pink tinged.

Leaves alternate, drooping on very slender leafstalks of ½–¾ inch (13–19 mm), yellow green, pink tinged. Blades lance-shaped, 2½–5 inches (6–13 cm) long and ¾–¾ inch (1–2 cm) wide, long-pointed at both ends, thin, dull gray green on both surfaces, with narrow midvein and side veins faint or scarcely visible, with gland dots visible under lens. Juvenile leaves opposite for 3–4 pairs, then alternate, short-stalked, very narrow (linear) to oblong, 1½–3 inches (4–7.5 cm) long and ¼–⅝ inch (6–15 mm) wide, dull green.

Flower clusters (umbels) at leaf base, 1–1½ inches (2.5–4 cm) long, with 3–7 long-stalked flowers from curved stalk. Flowers bending down on curved stalks, ¾–1 inch (2–2.5 cm) across the many spreading white or sometimes pink or reddish stamens. Buds egg-shaped, ⅜–⅝ inch (10–15 mm) long and ¼–⅜ inch (6–10 mm) wide, with conical lid shorter than conical base, covered with gland dots.

Seed capsules on stalk less than ¼ inch (6 mm) long, egg-shaped and narrowed at base, about ⅜ inch (10 mm) long and ⅕ inch (8 mm) wide, with narrow opening, wide sunken disk, and 5 enclosed valves.

Wood dark reddish brown, with interlocked grain and fine texture, very heavy (sp. gr. 0.85), very hard, very strong, and very durable, but difficult to work.

The wood has been used in Hawaii only for fenceposts. In Australia it is used for railroad cross-ties

and general construction, occasionally for large heavy beams.

In Hawaii this species has been planted mainly in and to semiarid areas, where it has been the only tree tried that survived. The Division of Forestry planted about 150,000 trees before 1960, mostly on Oahu at the Honouliuli and Mokuleia Forest Reserves, both very dry sites. It was also used on the dry ridges of Molokai. Parker Ranch planted it in several large blocks, some of which may be seen along the highway between Waimea and Puu Waawaa and lower Saddle Road near Waikii.

### **Champion**

Height 83 ft (25.3 m), c.b.h. 7.9 ft (2.4 m), spread 51 ft (15.5 m). Haleakala Ranch, Makawao, Maui (1968).

### **Range**

Southeastern Australia, sometimes in almost pure open stands or scattered with other eucalypts. Native in dry areas and adapted to winter rainfall climate. Widely planted, for example, in North Africa.

### **Other common names**

red ironbark (Hawaii); red ironbark, ironbark, mugga (Australia)



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Twig with flowers, fruits (bottom), 1 X (Maiden).