

Tuart Identification



Tuart (Eucalyptus gomphocephala)

The tuart has dense foliage, dull grey bark and showy white to cream flowers. It is restricted to coastal areas. Early accounts by explorers and settlers near Busselton describe the forest as a “beautiful open forest in which visibility was clear for a half mile in any direction”. It is remarkable that the tuart forest has survived at all, as the land on which it grows was eagerly sought for grazing, the limestone found in its soil was quarried to manufacture quicklime for building and agriculture, and the light yellow wood was prized for its high density and resistance to wear.

Tuarts grow up to 40 metres high. Its rough, fibrous grey bark flakes into small pieces. The leaves are often curved, 90 to 160 millimetres long, and are a shiny light green above and paler below. The almost stalkless buds cluster in groups of seven. Tuart buds are very distinctive; they have swollen bud caps and are shaped like small ice cream cones. Each bud cap is eight to 10 millimetres long and the species name refers to this feature - ‘gompho’ (club) and ‘cephala’ (head).

The fruits are narrow, cup-shaped and 13 to 25 millimetres long, with a fairly broad rim.

Although the Tuart does not have a lignotuber and therefore does not form a mallee, it is still common for the Tuart to have multiple stems when it is growing near the sea where it is subjected to salt winds. These areas are also frequently porous and alkaline (Quindalup sands) which further stress the trees. Tuart is frequently the only natural eucalypt found in these areas.

In Trigg Bushland, Tuart is generally the only eucalypt on Quindalup sands but may grow in the vicinity of Marri on other soils (or where planting has occurred). Features of these trees (and Jarrah for comparison) are noted below.

Marri (Eucalyptus calophylla)

This is one of the most common trees of the south-west forests. Marri belongs to a group of eucalypts known as bloodwoods, because their trunks exude a dark red gum. The large woody fruits are known as “honkey nuts”, and inspired May Gibbs’ stories about the gumnut babies, Snugglepot and Cuddlepie. Marri has the largest seeds of any eucalypt and is a very important food source for a range of parrots and cockatoos.

A Marri tree may grow 60 metres high, but is sometimes much smaller and grows as a mallee. The rough bark is greyish-brown to dark brown and flakes off in small pieces. The leaves are 85 to 150 millimetres long; dull to shiny dark green above and paler below, with closely packed veins.

The buds are on long stalks and in loose clusters of three to seven. Each bud has a hemispherical cap two to four millimetres long. Marri flowers are usually white.

The large woody, urn-shaped fruits are 26 to 50 millimetres long and 22 to 40 millimetres wide.

Jarrah (Eucalyptus marginata)

One of the commonest and most well-known trees of the south-west, jarrah is a stately tree with a straight trunk. For many years it has been the principal hardwood tree harvested for timber. Its richly coloured and beautifully grained timber is sought after for cabinet making, flooring and paneling and is resistant to termites. Before the era of bitumen roads, famous roads in cities such as London and Berlin were paved with blocks of jarrah.

This tree usually grows up to 40 metres high and has rough, greyish-brown fibrous bark which it sheds in long flat strips. The leaves are often curved, 80 to 130 millimetres long, shiny dark green above and paler below. The stalked buds are in clusters of seven to 11. Each bud has a narrow, conical bud cap five to nine millimetres long. The flowers are white. The fruits are spherical to barrel-shaped, and nine to 16 millimetres long.

Field identification (also see illustrations)

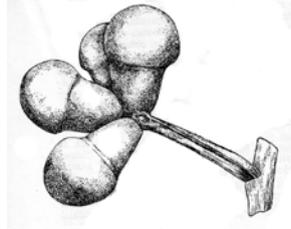
- ✓ Check the habit of the tree – is it loose and sprawling? Does it have sharp elbows?
- ✓ Check the color of the trunk – is it grey? Is it tessellated?
- ✓ Check the fruit – is it urn shaped or small and round?
- ✓ Check the flower bud – is it shaped like an ice cream cone?
- ✓ Young trees – are the leaves heart shaped?

Tuart

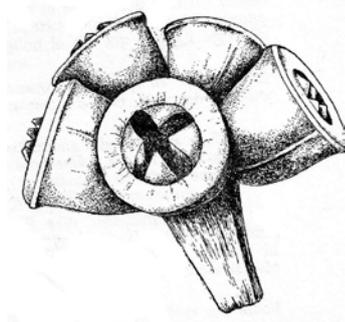
Bark: Rough, fibrous grey bark flakes into small pieces.

Leaves: Often curved, 90 to 160 millimetres long, and are a shiny light green above and paler below.

Buds: Swollen bud caps shaped like small ice cream cones. Each bud cap is eight to 10 millimetres long.



Fruit: Narrow, cup-shaped and 13 to 25 millimetres long, with a fairly broad rim.



Seedling:



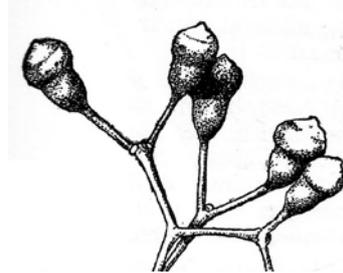
Juvenile leaf: Heart shaped

Marri

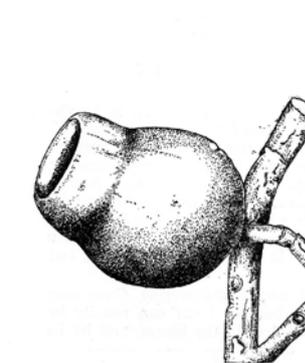
Bark: Rough bark greyish-brown to dark brown and flakes off in small pieces.

Leaves: 85 to 150 millimetres long; dull to shiny dark green above and paler below, with closely packed veins.

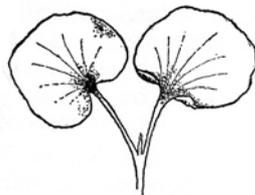
Buds: On long stalks and in loose clusters of three to seven. Each bud has a hemispherical cap two to four millimetres long.



Fruit: Large woody, urn-shaped fruits 26 to 50 millimetres long and 22 to 40 millimetres wide.



Seedling:



Jarrah

Bark: Rough, greyish-brown fibrous bark which it sheds in long flat strips.

Leaves: Often curved, 80 to 130 millimetres long, shiny dark green above and paler below.

Buds: In clusters of seven to 11. Each bud has a narrow, conical bud cap five to nine millimetres long.



Fruit: Spherical to barrel-shaped, and nine to 16 millimetres long.



Seedling:



C. A. Gardner.

Sources: http://www.calm.wa.gov.au/plants_animals/tree_tuart.html
Woodman Point, A Relic of Perth's Coastal Vegetation by Robert Powell and Jane Emberson
Eucalypts of Western Australia, C A Gardner
Leaf and Branch, Robert Powell

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