

EUCALYPT TOUR

A TOUR TO MT ALEXANDER AND WALMER TO LOOK AT EUCALYPTS

Eucalypts grow new bark each year. On some, the old dead bark falls off. These eucalypts are called gums. The bark may fall off in patches or ribbons. Often the old bark is brightly colored. Candlebark can be bright red; others pink, or blue grey, or brown. The new bark may be smooth and white; Lemon Scented Gum is one example.

Other eucalypts keep the old, dead bark, and with age, quite a thick layer of bark can accumulate. This bark may be hard and dense (the ironbarks), or stringy (the stringbarks) or finely fibrous (box and peppermints)

Some gums keep quite a lot of old bark at the base and it is so not always easy to recognise a gum. Practice helps!

A curious feature of eucalypts is that the sucker leaves and the leaves of young plants (called the juvenile leaves) are often quite different to the leaves of adult plants. Because of the great variation in the juvenile leaves, they are a great help in distinguishing between different kinds of eucalypt.

BARK TYPES



0.0 FROM SEC, TURN RIGHT INTO BARKER STREET

0.1 Lemon-scented Gum is on the left, in the gardens. The lovely smooth white to pink bark makes this perhaps the most beautiful of all eucalypts. When you get the chance, crush on sniff one of the leaves. Unfortunately, this tree is frost tender and hard to grow in Castlemaine.

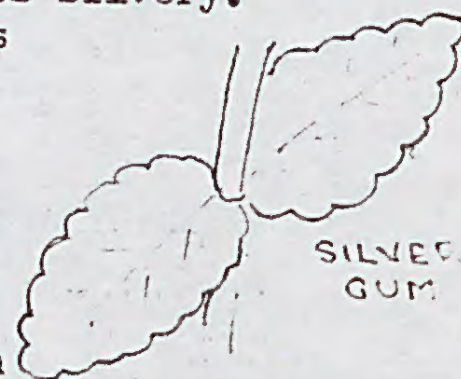
0.2 TURN LEFT ALONG THE MELBOURNE ROAD TO CHEWTON

0.3 Mahogany Gum One of these is planted on the old Tech College site, and another in the Castlemaine South School grounds.

0.7 The trunk has rough fibrous bark and the upper branches are dark coloured. The name can be Mahogany Gum (if you think it to have smooth bark) or Southern Mahogany

0.8 Silver Gum is one of several kinds of eucalypt planted at the motel. The tree is bushy, and the leaves silvery. Its home is restricted to a few localities near Marysville. When you get the chance, look at its unusual wavy-edged leaves.

1.3 Red Ironbark One is planted at the Railway Avenue corner. The "iron-bark" is unmistakable. Ironbark is native to the local forests; but planted specimens often have red flowers and silvery leaves. It flowers over winter and so is an excellent plant for honeyeaters.

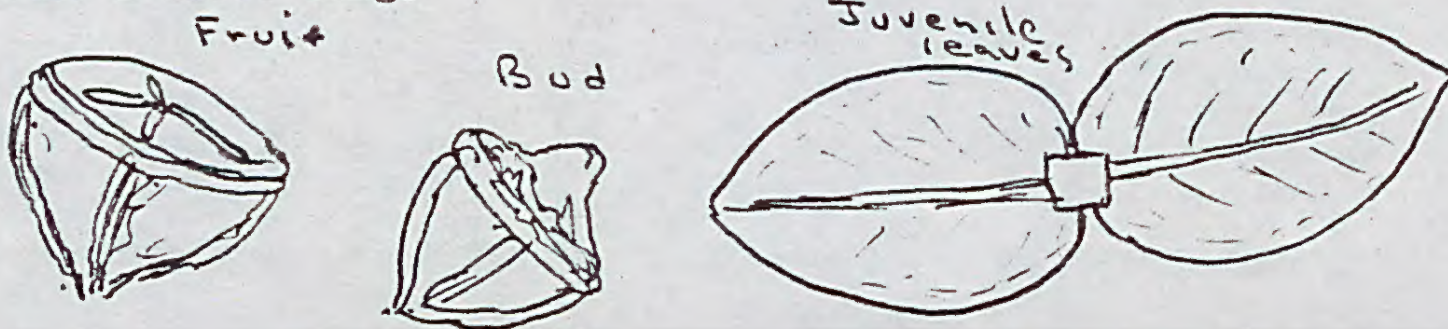


1.8 Yellow Gum Red-flowering Yellow Gums are planted for about the next kilometre. They are very suitable for roadside planting; they don't grow very tall and the flowers attract honeyeaters. Savage pruning does little for them though!

A few Mahogany gums have been planted near the Wesley Hill hall.

2.8 Red Ironbarks have been planted for the next kilometre or so.

2.8 Tasmanian Blue Gums have been planted here. When you can, look at the curious large warty fruit and buds. Notice the large opposite, stalkless, silvery juvenile leaves. The adult leaves are often much larger than most eucalyptus leaves - sometimes half a metre long.



2.9 Sugar Gums have shiny green leaves. The underside of the leaves is much paler.

3.7 Sugar Gum and Tasmanian Blue Gum are together, just past Manchester Street. Compare the long green leaves of the Blue Gum with the green shiny leaves of the Sugar Gum.

These two species are sometimes planted in quite small suburban gardens !!

4.1 Blue Gums are common now until we reach Expedition Pass. There is a patch opposite Adelaide St., and also on the right behind the Chewton oval. Someone, many years ago, must have planted them, and on a large scale.

5.2 Sugar Gum A few are growing opposite the Chewton Tennis Club.

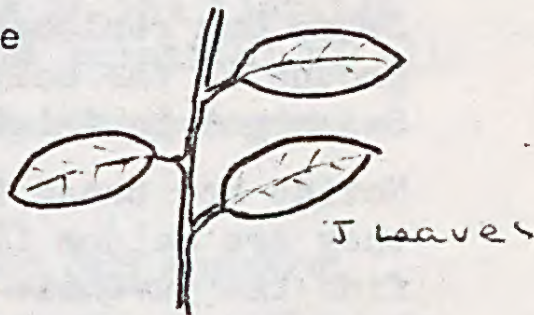
5.5 TURN LEFT FROM THE HIGHWAY ALONG GOLDEN POINT ROAD

In 5½ km, all the eucalypts have been planted. Here a few small red gum are next to the creek. The big trees are Blue Gum. They will be common for a kilometre or so.

6.2 Red Box can be seen on the left and right. The roundish, often bluish leaves are quite distinctive.

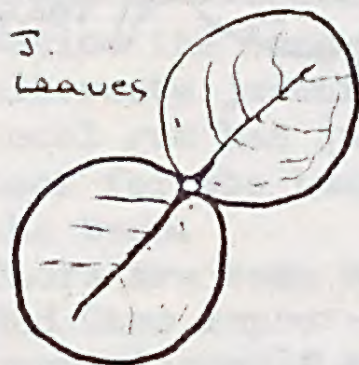
7.1 STOP 1 YELLOW BOX

Although called a box, the name can be misleading for the bark can be almost gum-like, or brown and finely fibrous (like a box) or black and hard (rather like an ironbark). The upper branches are usually smooth but perhaps the most distinctive feature is the small leaves. Compare the leaves with the leaves of other trees. Feel the bark. Scattered yellow box will continue until we reach the highway.



8.6 STOP 2 LONG-LEAF BOX

Long-leaf Box, or Cabbage Box, is usually a sprawling tree with box-like bark to the smallest branches. The juvenile leaves are silver blue, round, in pairs, and stalkless. The adult leaves are often 30 cm or more, but around Castlemaine they may be 10 cm or less. Long-leaf box is the only rough barked tree with round, opposite, stalkless juvenile leaves.



The buds and fruit are also quite distinctive. Feel the bark. Notice the fine fibres in it.

- 9.1 Reservoir River Red Gum are growing at the reservoir edge. We will see many more later on. On the right mixed Box grows, but it is not the place to stop

Past the reservoir we are on to granite, with mostly Red Gum with a few Yellow Box

- 10.8 Faraday School A short pause here, to look at Yellow Box and River Red Gum. Which is which?

- 10.9 CROSS THE CALDER HIGHWAY AND CONTINUE ON THE SUTTON GRANGE RD.

Almost all Red Gum for the next kilometre, with a few Yellow Box.

- 12.6 A few Candlebark now.

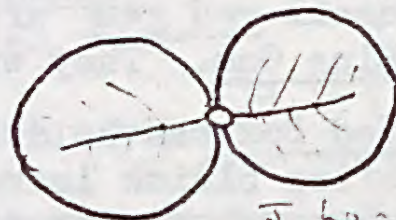
- 13.1 **STOP 3 CANDLEBARK**

At some times of the year the bark is a deep red, before it falls off to give a white trunk. There is no more beautiful tree than a Candlebark at this time.

The juvenile leaves could easily be mistaken for those of the Long-leaf Box; Candlebark is the only local gum with this kind of juvenile leaf.

Candlebark is rare north of Castlemaine; it is much more common further south.

Notice that the buds and fruit are in 3's



J. leaves



Buds

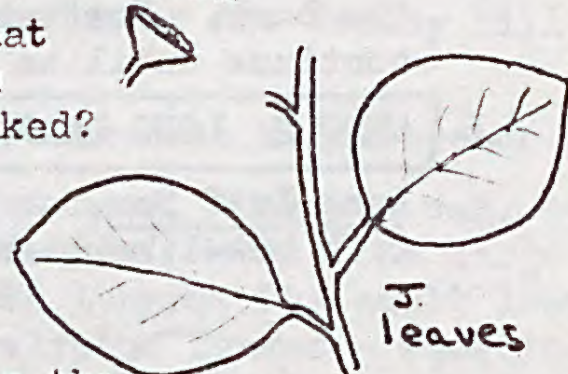
- 14.3 **STOP 4 SWAMP GUM**

Swamp Gum replaces River Red Gum along creeks and on swampy ground in the colder areas to the south, such as Trentham. Swamp gum is fairly rare around Castlemaine.

Notice how broad the leaves are, and that they are seldom flat, but wavy. Can you find the juvenile leaves. Are they stalked? In pairs or single? and what colour?

The fruit is also quite distinctive.

Fruit



J. leaves

- 14.5 TURN LEFT ALONG THE KOALA PARK ROAD

Manna Gum can now be seen. Mostly it is the only eucalypt for the next 3 km.



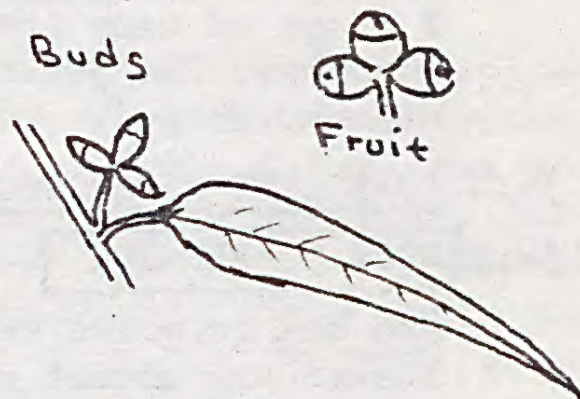
J. leaves of

17.5 **STOP 5 MANNA GUM**

The "hill form" of Manna Gum grows here. In the wetter forests (e.g. the Otways) it grows to 50 m or more. Along rivers to the south it resembles River Red Gum; in this situation it is a most impressive tree of unsurpassed beauty.

The local form of Manna Gum has more rough bark than the other forms. Like Candlebark its buds and fruits are in 3's (although sometimes you can find more than 3 on Mt Alexander).

Notice the juvenile leaves. The only eucalypt around Castlemaine with similar juvenile leaves is the rough barked Narrow-leaf Peppermint

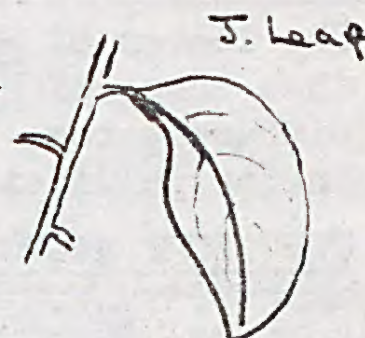


18.0 Messmate Stringybark begins to appear with Manna Gum

19.9 DETOUR - TURN TO THE T.V. TOWERS

20.4 **STOP 6 MESSMATE STRINGYBARK**

Messmate is often found growing with other species, hence its name. Notice the unequal (oblique) leaves. The juvenile leaves are similar.



20.9 TURN RIGHT INTO MAIN KOALA PARK ROAD

22.9 Pause to look at the magnificent Yellow Box on the flattish area. Without doubt, Yellow Box are the most beautiful of all!

23.2 More very fine Yellow Box; note the blackish shaggy bark.

24.1 **STOP 7 WHAT TREE IS THIS?**

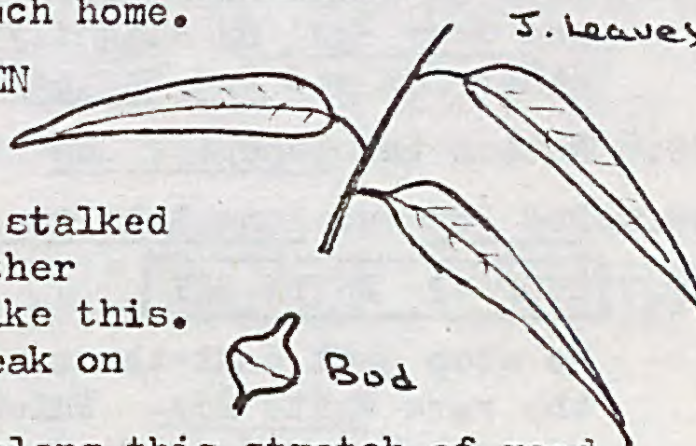
24.2 TURN LEFT AND FOLLOW THE BITUMEN . River Red Gum appears, and will be with us until we reach home.

24.7 VEER RIGHT, FOLLOWING THE BITUMEN

25.9 **STOP 8 RIVER RED GUM**

Notice the long, narrow, green, stalked alternate juvenile leaves. No other local gum has juvenile leaves like this. Look for the buds. Notice the beak on the buds.

There are some beautiful trees along this stretch of road. Red Gums improve with age; old mature Red Gums are unquestionably the most beautiful eucalypts of all.



25.9 TURN LEFT TO FOLLOW THE RESERVOIR If time permits we will look into the reservoir near the pumping station.

29.8 CROSS HIGHWAY TO FOLLOW THE OLD HIGHWAY

31.3 TURN LEFT INTO FOGARTYS GAP ROAD, JUST PAST THE STORE

31.6 Grey Box We now find Grey Box; it will be with us all of the way home with Red Gum. Notice the typical Y shape of many trees, and the smooth upper branches. The juvenile leaves are almost diamond shaped.

Y. Leaf of
Grey Box



34.1 TURN LEFT ALONG WOODBROOK ROAD

34.3 STOP 9 RED BOX

Red box is quite easily recognised. The leaves are almost round - often the leaf tip is notched, and the colour is often bluish. The juvenile leaves are similar. Red Box is not a tree of the low areas.

Red
Box



36.6 STOP 10 RED STRINGYBARK - on the crest of the hill.

The leaves of Red Stringybark are usually smaller and duller than those of Messmate. The buds are quite different too. Red Stringybark is common in the goldfields forests.

Red
Stringy-
bark



37.4 TURN LEFT ALONG WHITE GUM ROAD

37.7 STOP 11 WHITE BOX

The stop is just past the old church. Notice the large, powder-white juvenile leaves. The buds and fruit are powder-white too; you need a very frosty morning to see them at their best. White Box is one of the rarest of the local trees; it is however quite common around Lake Eppalock.

39.2 VEER RIGHT AND FOLLOW THE CREEK. Notice Red Gum along the creek and Grey Box on slightly higher ground. Higher still we get other box and Red Stringybark

39.6 Notice the Mahogany Gum near the stock ramp.

40.0 Red Box and Long-leaf Box. Take care on the narrow winding road.

42.7 STOP 12 WHITE BOX

We stop just past the saw mill corner. Here is another patch of the rare White Box. Which of the nearby trees are White Box, and which are Grey Box?

43.2 More Yellow Box just before the bridge over Barkers Creek

Once again we mostly have Red Gum and Grey Box on the way home

Now that you have finished this Eucalypt tour, which is the most beautiful eucalypt of all?

E.P.

Editorial

It has been pleasing to note that many of the Honeyeaters returned during the last month. We had been having sporadic visits from a Spinebill for some time, but now there seem to be some in the garden almost all the time. A few weeks ago the Yellow-faced Honeyeaters reappeared and have been calling noisily ever since. It is very pleasant to awaken to their calls each morning. Usually they appear to play with the Spinebills, as they chase each other round the garden in a very agile manner, much too agile for the Wattle Birds which have mostly been in fairly short supply. I was interested to note that the bird being chased by the Yellow-faced yesterday was a White-plumed Honeyeater.

The lack of attention which the flowering of the Green Mallee has received this year is disappointing, as last year it attracted many Honeyeaters, including a group of about six Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters, which have not returned this year. On the other hand I have at long last been able to add a Willie Wagtail to my garden list after having seen them constantly about a hundred metres down the street. Another bird recently added is the Small or Yellow Thornbill. I had been wondering about these small visitors for some time but as they were usually high up among the foliage I could not make a positive identification. A few days ago I was standing on the verandah beside a flowering Grevillea when one of these Thornbills suddenly flew down from high in the Oak tree, perched in the Grevillea, then proceeded to do a Hummingbird act right under my nose, less than a metre away. I had no difficulty in identifying it from the chart which appeared in the last edition of the "Castlemaine Naturalist".

Silvereyes have not been scarce recently either. They are very appreciative of the red berries on the creeping saltbush. A party of wrens announced themselves with their chattering and have kept coming each day which is nice.

Coming Events

Meeting: Friday, June 8.

Guest speakers, Dr and Mrs Champion of Maldon will be sharing their experiences of their trek through the Himalayas.

Outing: Saturday, June 9. See page 1.

This month we have a guided tour of the local Eucalypts, which will take the form of a pleasant drive over Mt Alexander. Not too far, nor too strenuous. (Unless you want to do it on foot). This tour will be led by Ern Perkins.

THE MONTH AT CAMPBELLS CREEK (April)

by T.E.C.

The Banksia ericifolia is in bloom and so, many Yellow-faced Honeyeaters have arrived in for the harvest. Big competition between them and the Silvereyes. Fortunately the Wattle birds have kept away mainly claiming their various territory rights. They are the "Terrorists" of the bird world, seeming to spend most of their time chasing away every small bird that flies near. I have even noticed them put a crow to flight. Two foxes were noticed close to the house; probably inspecting somebody's fowl house in Campbells Creek.

During the period we drove along some roads near Metcalfe. Amazed to find so many interesting stretches with plenty of roadside vegetation. Must go again and spend more time. As I finish this the first Eastern Spinebills have arrived. They must be from last year as they flew straight to the feeding bottle.

UNUSUAL PLANTS OF THE AREA

During the past week I went up in the pines to see how the plants we found there a few years ago were after the beating they had with drought and frost.

The Hop Goodenia is quite dead, and as far as I could see, no seedlings as yet coming up. The Prostanthera has completely recovered. When I saw it, soon after the drought, there were just signs of greenness in the main stems only; on the next visit new leaves were sprouting from these stems. I also found a 6" seedling growing about a metre away. The Burgan bushes are flourishing and no worries there. I counted 20 of them from 2 to ten feet in height.

While walking in the pines I again saw a Scaly Thrush fossicking amongst the leaf litter.