

Plant of the Month - July

by Allan Carr

Eucalyptus bancroftii

Tumbledown Gum

Pronunciation: you-ka-LIP-tus ban-CROFT-ee-eye

MYRTACEAE

Derivation: *Eucalyptus*, from the Greek, *eu* – well and *kalyptos* – covered (refers to the flower bud which has a cap or operculum); *bancroftii*, after Dr Thomas Bancroft, Qld physician with an interest in botany and resident of Deception Bay.



Leaves, buds, flowers



New summer bark



Leaves, fruits

Eucalyptus is a genus of close to 900 species but it is hard to establish an exact number from the literature as there are still species undescribed. All but 8 are endemic in Australia, 6 are shared with New Guinea and 2 don't occur here. Eucalypts include around 100 *Corymbias* and 12 or so *Angophoras*.

Description: *E. bancroftii* is a tree to 10 m with a crooked main stem and contorted branches in dry heathland and woodland from Woodgate in Qld to Port Macquarie in NSW. Bark is shed in summer to reveal a smooth orange surface fading to dull grey over the year.

Leaves to 220 mm x 40 mm are alternate, curved, leathery, dull grey-green and *concolorous. When crushed they are aromatic with a typical eucalyptus aroma.

Flowers consist of white stamens in a circle to 15 mm across which emerge from under conical or cylindrical bud caps from July to November. Inflorescences are made up of 5 to 7 flowered *umbels on rigid *peduncles to 20 mm long.

Fruits are cup-shaped or funnel-shaped woody capsules to 9 mm x 9 mm with 3 or 4 protruding valves.

*concolorous = each surface having the same colour

*umbel = an inflorescence where the single flower stalks arise from the top of a peduncle

*peduncle = the stalk of an inflorescence (the arrangement in which flowers are borne)



Habit