

## Plant of the Month - May

by Allan Carr

### *Eucalyptus tereticornis*

forest red gum

**Pronunciation:** yoo-ca-LIP-tus ter-ee-ti-COR-nis

MYRTACEAE

**Derivation:** *Eucalyptus*, from the Greek, *eu* – well and *kalyptos* – covered (a reference to the bud cap or operculum); *tereticornis*, from the Latin, *teres* – rounded/ terete (circular in cross-section) and *cornu* – a horn (referring to the horn-shaped operculum).



Buds, flowers



Buds, flowers - pink form



Fruits

Eucalyptus is one of the world's most important plant genera with nearly 900 species mostly in Australia but a few extend to, or are found only in New Guinea, Indonesia or the Philippines. These are the most widely planted trees in plantations around the world.

**Description:** *E. tereticornis* is a mainly coastal tree with two recognised subspecies in south-east Qld – *E. tereticornis* subsp. *basaltica* (a tree to 20 m) which occurs on hillsides and ridge tops such as Main Range, McPherson Range and Mt Cotton, while *E. tereticornis* subsp. *tereticornis* (a tree to 45 m) occurs from Cairns, Qld, to Bega, NSW and possibly in southern New Guinea. Bark is shed in irregular sheets, resulting in a smooth trunk surface coloured in patches of creamy-white, grey and bluish-grey. The timber is strong and durable for heavy construction and red, hence the common name.

**Leaves** to 240 mm x 35 mm are alternate, curved and greyish-green. They are very aromatic when crushed.

**Flowers** have a horn-shaped bud cap 2 to 5 times longer than the base width. In \*axillary clusters of 5 to 12 they are up to 15 mm across with masses of white or pink-tinged stamens from June to October.

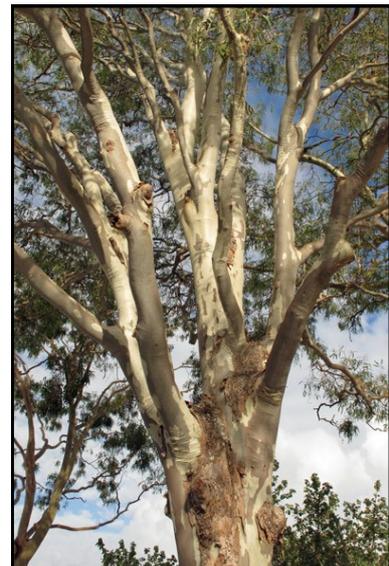
**Fruits** are woody cup-shaped gum nuts to 8 mm x 8 mm with four or five protruding valves and contain small brown-black jagged seeds.



Bark

*E. tereticornis* is a primary food tree of Koalas (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) and a food source for many birds, flying foxes and possums as well as many invertebrates. Hollows provide nesting sites for a variety of wildlife.

\*axillary = arising from the angle between leaf and stem



Habit