

Eucalyptus camaldulensis

Myrtaceae

Eastern Australia

Am: *Key babir zaf*

Eng: *Red river gum, Murray red gum*

Ecology

Widely distributed in its native Australia and one of the first *Eucalyptus* spp. used elsewhere, both in the Mediterranean and the tropics. Planted in Africa since around 1900, it does well in semi-arid regions and tolerates a long dry season as well as some salinity. It does well in deep silt or clay soil in Dry and Moist Kolla agroclimatic zones in Tigray, Gonder, Shoa, Harerge and Kefa, 1,200–2,800 m.

Uses

Firewood, charcoal, timber (construction), poles (power lines), posts, bee forage, ornamental, windbreak.

Description

A tall evergreen tree to 30 m, deeply branched but also with a long straight bole. BARK: White to brown, thin and peeling in long strips; when cut it exudes red gum. LEAVES: Grey-blue, long and drooping, to 30 cm, young leaves ovate to broadly lanceolate; mature leaves lanceolate, thin and pendent. FLOWERS: White clusters, short conical bud caps. FRUIT: Very small rounded capsules on thin stalks, each less than 1 cm, 4 valves.

Propagation

Seedlings (sow in seedbed and prick out in pots), seedlings ready for planting after 4–5 months. Direct sowing at site is possible but

requires careful management in the early stages. Farmers sometimes cut branches with mature fruits, spread the branches on the site and leave there for the fruit to open and disperse seed, then water to keep the soil moist to ensure germination, after some time, when the germinants are well established, remove the branches. Thinning to suitable spacing is needed when this technique is applied

Seed

1,000,000–3,000,000 seed per kg.

Germinates in one week.

Treatment: Not necessary. Mix with sand for more even sowing.

Storage: Seed can be stored for a long time.

Management

Coppicing, pollarding.

Remarks

Young trees require protection from termites. The species has been primarily introduced for quick-growing fuelwood. It is also useful for homestead plantation, woodlots and along roads. The timber is red, heavy and hard. Do not plant near crops because of root competition for water and nutrients. All gum-tree flowers have much nectar and attract bees.



