

Eucalyptus saligna

Myrtaceae

Coastal Eastern Australia

Am: *Saligna bahir zaf*

Eng: *Sydney blue gum*

Ecology

A tree widely planted in the tropics for fuel, from Brazil, Hawaii, East and South Africa as well as in Asia and even on New Zealand. This is the dominant eucalyptus species grown in the highlands in Arsi region. It will grow in Moist and Wet Kolla and Weyna Dega agroclimatic zones in Shoa, Harerge, Arsi, Sidamo and Kefa, 1,700–2,300 m.

Uses

Firewood, charcoal, poles, timber, furniture (pulpwood, veneer, plywood, construction), medicine, bee forage, shade, windbreak.

Description

A tall tree, usually 40–50 m but may reach 60–70 m, the crown irregular to rounded, the trunk straight and up to 1.5 m across, this width continued up to $\frac{1}{3}$ of the tree's height. BARK: On old trunks grey to brown, rough with thick ridges from the base to about 9 m, and peeling in strips. Upper branches smooth bluish-white (greenish). LEAVES: Long and thin to a pointed tip, curved to 20 cm, to 3 cm across, dull green, paler below, the flat stalks 1–2 cm, yellow-pink. FLOWERS: Small and white, 3–4 buds in a group (smaller than *E. grandis*). Capsules dark brown, in groups of 4–8, each only 5–6 mm, conical, tapering suddenly at the base to a clear stalk of 5–6 mm (smaller and more delicate than *E. grandis*). Teeth of capsule usually 3–4, same colour as cup, tips sharp-pointed,

straight or spreading.

Propagation

Seedlings (seedlings require 3 - 4 months in the nursery to reach suitable size for planting), 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

The tree is a prolific seeder. 1,700,000–2,000,000 seed per kg.

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

Storage: Seed can be stored for over 2 years.

Management

It is very fast growing on good sites. Coppicing, wind-throw susceptible.

Remarks

The species should not be planted near crops as it adversely affects yields. A good tree for woodlots, this species grows naturally on slopes and is most suitable for moist cool mountains (*E. grandis* thrives best in humid subtropical conditions). The roots have swellings (lignotubers) just below the soil surface (absent in *E. grandis*). The timber is light red to red-brown and moderately heavy, tough and durable; suitable for many purposes but mainly fuelwood.





fruit capsules



A. Birnie