Eucalyptus saligna

Myrtaceae

Coastal eastern Australia

COMMON NAMES: **English:** Sydney blue gum; **Kamba:** Musilikina; **Kikuyu:** Mubau, Munyua mai, Muringamu; **Kisii:** Omoringarnu; **Luo:** Bao, Bap kaladali, Bawo; **Swahili:** Mtimbao.

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 2/3 of the tree's height. BARK: Appearing white from a distance; near the base of old trunks grey–brown, **rough with thick ridges,** peeling in strips from about 4 m up the trunk to reveal **smooth, blue-white**-green surface. 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*). FRUIT: Capsules dark brown, in groups of 4–8, each only 5–6 mm, tapering suddenly at the base to a clear stalk 5–6 mm (smaller and more delicate than in *E. grandis*). **Capsule teeth usually 3–4, same colour as cup, tips sharp-pointed, straight or spreading.**

ECOLOGY: *E. saligna* is widely planted in the tropics from Brazil to Hawaii, eastern and South Africa as well as in Asia, and even on New Zealand. In Kenya, it is the dominant gum grown in the highlands, 1,200–2,400 m. It will grow in all but arid areas or those infested by termites. Agroclimatic Zones I–III.

USES: Firewood, charcoal, timber (construction, pulpwood), furniture, poles, posts, veneer, medicine, bee forage, shade, windbreak, veterinary medicine.

PROPAGATION: Seedlings, direct sowing at site.

SEED: The tree is a prolific seeder. On average 3,000,000 seeds per kg. Germination rate 30–70%.
treatment: Not necessary.
storage: Seed can be stored for long periods.

MANAGEMENT: Very fast growing on good sites; coppices very well.

REMARKS: The species should not be planted near crops as yields are adversely affected. A good tree for woodlots. *E. saligna* is often confused with *E. grandis*. The 2 species are closely related taxonomically and are superficially similar in appearance. However, the fruit valves of *E. saligna* protrude and curve outwards. Tea factories have preferred *E. grandis* because the timber can be cut in 10 years and the wood splits easily into firewood. The pink to red heartwood of *E. saligna* is moderately durable and easy to work.

FURTHER READING: http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/Sites/TreeDBS/AFT/AFT.htm; Albrecht, 1993; Bekele-Tesemma et al., 1993; Dharani, 2002; Mbuya et al., 1994; National Academy of Sciences, 1979; Noad and Birnie, 1989.