

Eucalyptus mannifera

red-spotted gum, brittle gum

The 'Maidenaria gums'

Origin of name: From the Greek *manna* (the white crystallised honeydew or sap from the leaves and bark, produced by insect attack in many plants, including in eucalypts) and *fera* (bearing or carrying).

The common name refers to its seasonally mottled bark, and the relatively brittle nature of its wood, respectively.

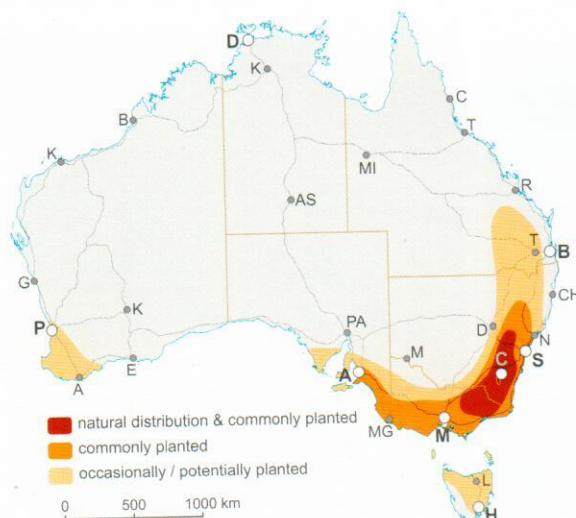
Other names: white brittle gum, mountain spotted gum, manna gum, mottled gum, white brittle gum.

Features: Tree, 5–18 m tall (rarely to 25 m tall in the wild), usually single-trunked from an inconspicuous ligno-tuber. Bark smooth, seasonally powdery white to grey to reddish brown, shedding in short strips and plates. Juvenile leaves narrow to ellipse-shaped, dull, blue-green. Adult leaves narrowly lance-shaped, 10–30 mm wide, dull, blue-green. Buds and fruits in groups of 7. Buds egg-shaped. Flowers white, occurring mainly in spring and summer. Fruits rounded to cup-shaped to broadly funnel-shaped, 4–7 mm wide.

Two variants of the species are here recognised:

- **Typical variant** (syn. var. *maculosa*): Light-crowned tree to 15 m tall. Leaves narrow. Grows naturally in the northern and central part of the species' distribution, in NSW and Vic.
- **Southern variant:** Heavier-crowned tree to 25 m tall. Leaves broader. Grows naturally in the southern part of the species' distribution, in Vic.

Natural distribution & habitat: Widespread in the Great Dividing Range of south-eastern Australia, from the Rylstone area on the Central Tablelands of NSW, south into eastern Vic as far as the Mansfield and Bruthen areas. It grows in sandy soils, on level topography to steep, rocky, sandstone slopes and plateaus, in woodland or forest vegetation. Populations in the alpine areas of Vic tend to be larger trees with broader juvenile and adult leaves, while those in the central part of its range (Canberra–Goulburn–Braidwood) tend to be small trees with relatively narrow leaves.



Why plant me?

- ▶ Ornamental tree, excellent for landscape planting
- ▶ Smooth, pale-coloured bark
- ▶ Crown of blue-green leaves
- ▶ Typical variant has a light crown providing dappled shade
- ▶ Moderately cold tolerant

Cultivation & uses: Widely planted for amenity in southern Australia, for its smooth pale-coloured bark and its crown of willowy leaves.

The typical variant, often sold as var. *maculosa*, is the most commonly planted, and is superior as a landscaping tree. It is commonly used along avenues in Canberra. It is generally smaller-growing than the southern variant, and has a light-weight crown of fine leaves, which casts a dappled shade, allowing the growth of other plants beneath. Plants are sometimes marketed as *E. 'Little Spotty'* and *E. mannifera 'dwarf selection'*.

The southern variant is less commonly seen in cultivation, and develops into a larger tree with a denser crown of slightly broader leaves. It is also very ornamental with its white to pale pink-grey smooth bark.

Both variants are quite adaptable to various soils and climates, providing the soil is well drained. The species is mildly drought tolerant.

Management: A generally problem-free species. The southern variant can eventually grow into a moderately large tree. The species is generally structurally sound and is rarely subject to sudden limb failure under calm conditions, despite its common name 'brittle gum'.

Similar species:

◦ ***E. scoparia* (Wallangarra white gum)**, p. 178
A closely-related species, differing from *E. mannifera* most conspicuously in its shiny green leaves. It is naturally rare, being restricted to the northern end of the New England Tableland in the NSW/Qld border region. It has been widely planted in Australia, but is more drought susceptible than *E. mannifera*.

◦ ***E. nicholii* (willow peppermint)**, p. 134
A similar-sized tree, differing from *E. mannifera* most conspicuously in its non-shedding, grey-brown bark on the trunk and branches. It is naturally restricted to the New England Tableland in northern NSW, and is one of the most widely planted eucalypts in Australia. It is more drought susceptible than *E. mannifera*.

Preferences:

Water	Soil	Salt	Air temp.	Light
500–900 mm	limestone	heavy sea-spray	<5 °C	full sun, v. l. hrs
well-drained	other rock	light sea-spray	-5–0 °C	full sun, long hrs
poorly-drained	sand	highly saline soil	0–25 °C	full sun, sh. hrs
shallow w/table	loam/silt	mod. saline soil	25–42 °C	dappled, l. hrs
reg. irrigated	clay	sl. saline soil	>42 °C	dappled, sh. hrs