Corymbia intermedia (Pink Bloodwood)

In flower in late summer on the Sunshine Coast is Pink Bloodwood, ***Corymbia intermedia***. The corymbs (from which the genus gets its name) or bunches of cream flowers are quite noticeable as they are terminal, i.e., occurring at the ends of branches.

This is a useful but not definitive way of distinguishing ***Corymbias*** from ***Eucalypts*** whose flowers are usually axillary, i.e., occurring where the leaf joins the stem – a notable exception to this is the Brisbane Mallee, ***Eucalyptus curtisii***, which seems to be in a class of its own with few affinities to other Eucalypts. The woody fruit which follows the flower is relatively large, urn shaped and speckled, and contains the small winged seed.

As is common with bloodwoods, the leaves are discolorous, a paler green below than above, with fine, close-set veins. The bark is grey-brown, fibrous and tessellated, persisting on branches and twigs.

This is in contrast to the similar Red Bloodwood or ***Corymbia gummifera*** which has smooth bark at the ends of branches.

The tree's distribution is in a narrow coastal band extending from the mid New South Wales coast to Cape York. On the Sunshine Coast its form varies from a 40 m. straight trunked tree growing on fertile soils to a small twisted tree dwarfed by coastal winds and nutrient poor sand when it occurs close to the sea.

This versatility and the ability to tolerate some salt spray make it useful in cultivation. One particular local use is as a hardy root stock onto which is grafted various spectacular-flowering hybrids of ***Corymbia ptychocarpa*** (Swamp Bloodwood) from Northern Australia and the Western Australian Red Flowering Gum, ***Corymbia ficifolia***. These hybrids, which include "Summer Red" and "Summer Snow", can't be grown from seed and are difficult to strike from cuttings.

Corymbia "Summer Red"

The heartwood is often pink, giving the tree its common name, and is strong, durable and termite resistant. Consequently, it is used for fencing and heavy construction such as bridge building but not so much as sawn timber. It is also of importance to nectar feeders, and to marsupial gliders which gouge the bark to produce an edible sap. All in all, a highly valuable local species.

Robert M Price, February, 2020