

Eucalyptus conglomerata (Swamp Stringybark)

In Tewantin National Park a kilometre south of Noosaville along the Eumundi-Noosa Road and flowering in late Autumn are some fine examples of Queensland's most endangered eucalypt. One of the few Queensland stringybarks, ***Eucalyptus conglomerata*** or Swamp Stringybark is endemic to the Sunshine Coast area and distributed in five known locations between Beerwah and Kin Kin with an estimated population of just 1100. As you'd expect with a rare plant, the tree's requirements are particularly specialised. It occurs in an ecotone, in this case the zone between wet heath and even wetter sclerophyll forest, on deep sandy soils of low fertility and low pH (4 to 5), with poor drainage.



Distinguishing features are a multi-trunked mallee habit and the small white flowers clustered in the leaf axils, hence the species name ***conglomerata***, meaning “together, formed into a ball”.



The fruit is similarly small and clustered, the leaves glossy green on both sides and the bark is grey, persistent and fibrous. Being a true stringybark, the tree's bark can be pulled off in long strings, in contrast to other local fibrous barked Eucalypts such as the mahoganies (*E. acmenoides*, *E. latisinensis*, *E. resinifera* E. and *E. robusta*) and tallowwood (*E. microcorys*). The only other local stringybark I'm aware of is *Eucalyptus tindaliae* (Qld. White Stringybark).



Eucalyptus conglomerata can reach a height of 12 metres but in the Emu Mountain area there's a stand of the trees which is much smaller, possibly due to exposure to coastal winds. Some trunks are practically horizontal.



Seedlings of the species are very compact, exhibiting more lateral growth than is usual for young eucalypts and the immature leaves are hairy, discolourous and linear. I'm curious to see how it responds to cultivation as reproducing the right conditions for planting out could prove problematic. It does appear suited to bonsai.



Robert M Price, May, 2020