



Did you know, there is currently a shortage of some Eucalyptus ?

Eucalyptus varieties are trees, but if planted into a container, will mean they restrict their growth, a bit like a bonsai.

They are also known by their common name, gum trees, which are almost entirely Australian. Indeed, these are the trees that koalas eat and spend their lives in. In fact, only a few of the 700+ species recognized by science live entirely outside of Australia's borders. This group of evergreen trees (Don't lose their leaves over winter) from down-under have been introduced to countries all over the world, becoming one of the most widely cultivated trees across the world. Interestingly, most of Australia's ecosystems have evolved with frequent fire hazard

regimes, as a result, eucalyptus are generally fire-adapted trees that sprout back strongly after being burned.

Eucalyptus belong to the family Myrtaceae. Common features of eucalyptus include their shaggy bark, also called stringybark, which peels off either year-round or seasonally, depending on the species. These trees have an abundance of stamens, making them flowering trees, unlike pines. Also, they share cup-like flowers that develop into hard seed heads that resemble nuts. Most gum trees have blue-green, leathery leaves that have the menthol-smelling oil of eucalyptol.

### **Eucalyptus Tree Habitats in the UK**

Eucalyptus trees grow best in mild climates, their homeland, is generally not a frigid, snowy landscape like some parts of the UK.

A small handful of cold-hardy varieties of eucalyptus can grow in areas that experience occasional sub-zero degrees Fahrenheit during the winter. These varieties allow citizens of the places like the U.K, to plant eucalyptus.

Eucalyptus love to be in the sunniest places available and do well in nutrient-poor soil. Once established, they tolerate drought very well. Interestingly, eucalyptus have different leaf shapes depending on the age of the tree, making identification difficult in some situations.

### **The Many Uses of Eucalyptus Trees**

Eucalyptus wouldn't have spread throughout the world so quickly if it didn't have such a myriad of uses to us humans. While there are plenty more, here is a shortlist of some of the most important uses for eucalyptus.

#### **Oils**

Anyone who has walked in a eucalyptus forest knows the intense, spicey, minty smell the trees produce. This smell mainly comes from the chemical compound eucalyptol, which is found in the green leaves of eucalyptus trees. Eucalyptol is a powerful therapeutic oil. People have used eucalyptus oils for a wide variety of medicinal uses throughout history. It has antimicrobial properties, meaning it can kill bacteria and microbes. People have also used eucalyptus oil for dental care, respiratory illness, pain relief, as an immune stimulator, and to sterilize equipment. Some people enjoy the scent of eucalyptus and use it in aromatherapy or as a perfume.

## **Fuel as Firewood**

In many highland tropical and subtropical areas of the world, people use eucalyptus as fuel for cooking and heating their homes. Since they grow incredibly rapidly (some varieties grow ten or more feet per year) and don't need much care, they make ideal firewood trees. East Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia all have extensive eucalyptus stands for firewood use.

## **Floral Arrangements**

Due to their attractive, classy blue-green or grey-green colour, many florists use eucalyptus leaves as fillers for flower arrangements. Gunni, and Silver dollar eucalyptus, with its large, round leaves adds nice volume and interesting shapes to any bouquet. Eucalyptus work especially well in floral arrangements because their leathery leaves don't wilt. They look fresh for weeks!

## **An Effective Windbreak**

Due to their rapid growth, eucalyptus also make excellent windbreaks for farmers. A windbreak is usually a long hedge or row of trees planted on the windward side of a crop. The windbreak acts as a wall that slows down the wind. Windbreaks help farmers use less water on their crops.

Plants limit their use of water by creating thin layers of humid air around their leaves through transpiration. Wind rapidly whisks away this humid air and replaces it with dry air. As a result, the plants must use more water to thrive in a windy environment. When farmers reduce wind with windbreaks, plants can keep that layer of humid air around their leaves, and therefore use less water to grow.

## **Two Broad Categories of Eucalyptus Trees**

The eucalyptus genus, as mentioned above, is large and very diverse. To make sense of the genus, some botanists break it down into two broad categories of eucalypts; mallees and trees. These categories correspond to different growth habits within the genus. These categories provide a useful framework to understand the growing habits of eucalyptus.

### **Mallee – Short and Bushy Eucalyptus**

Mallee is an Australian Aboriginal word that refers to bush eucalyptus species that grow less than 30 feet tall. Mallee eucalyptus have many different stems, rather than one central stem. Mallee eucalypts have lignotubers, which are huge, basically like big, potato-like roots. These lignotubers suck up water during wet periods and save it for droughts.

In Australia, mallee ecosystems grow best in flat, semiarid environments with short, mild winters. They typically grow in sandy soils and are adapted to frequent fires. The lignotubers allow the mallees to sprout back quickly after a fire, allowing for new growth.

### **Tree-Like Eucalyptus**

The stately, single trunk growth form of these plants is what most people imagine when they hear the word 'eucalyptus.' Some types of eucalyptus trees have branches angled steeply towards the sky, while others have a broader, more spreading canopy. Some of the more common species, such as the southern blue gum, lack branches on the bottom half of their trunks, while others have branches all the way up. Some tall eucalyptus trees have lignotubers and some don't.

## **15 Types of Eucalyptus Trees**

There are over 700 species of eucalyptus – not to mention subspecies – in the world. With a dizzying array of eucalyptus available in the horticulture world, it can be tough for the layperson to identify the trees.

## Potting up Eucalyptus plug plants

When potting up eucalyptus young plants, you must be aware that you must not disturb the roots, if



possible, and do not use too large a pot. Doing both will probably kill your plant. A 7cm pot is the maximum size to use. half fill the pot with compost insert the plug, and top up with compost around the sides.

The compost should be of good quality, and would be better if you could add around 30% of Perlite or sharp sand, this helps drainage.

Once potted, water, then do not water again until the compost has dried out. Over watering, no drainage, and bad cloggy compost, with big bits in it, will kill your plants ! Liquid feed once a week, after a couple of weeks in its new pot.

In a few weeks, the plant will have grown more roots. Once the roots fill this pot size, you can pot up into a large pot, say a litre size. Too big a pot will stunt your plants growth, and hold too much water, which the plant will not like.

If you buy your plants in cold weather, you will need somewhere warm while young. If it's the middle of summer, then you should be ok outside, away from the wind, and in sun.



## Reviewers Wanted

We are always interested in your reviews about chilli plants. If you have grown them, tasted them, and have comments to make about certain varieties, feel free to leave feedback !