

Corymbia ficifolia: Red Flowering Gum¹

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Introduction

A native of Australia, *Corymbia ficifolia* grows best on the western coast of the United States and is seldom successful in the interior. Its flowers are spectacular, and it can be tried as a container plant in the North, wintered indoors. Foliage of eucalyptus is aromatic, with frequent distinguishing differences between juvenile and mature leaves. These plants are used in western landscapes.



Figure 1. Middle-aged *Corymbia ficifolia*: Red flowering gum.
Credits: Ed Gilman, UF/IFAS

General Information

Scientific name: *Corymbia ficifolia*

Pronunciation: core-IM-bee-uh fiss-ih-FOLE-ee-uh

Common name(s): Red flowering gum

Family: *Myrtaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 9B through 11 (Figure 2)

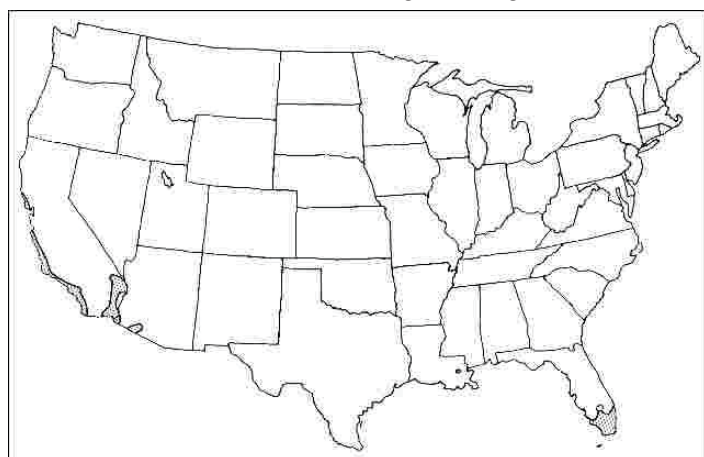


Figure 2. Range

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: not assessed/incomplete assessment

Uses: urban tolerant; specimen; highway median; street without sidewalk; tree lawn 3–4 feet wide; tree lawn 4–6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide

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Description

Height: 30 to 40 feet

Spread: 15 to 25 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular

Crown shape: round

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: fast

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Figure 3)

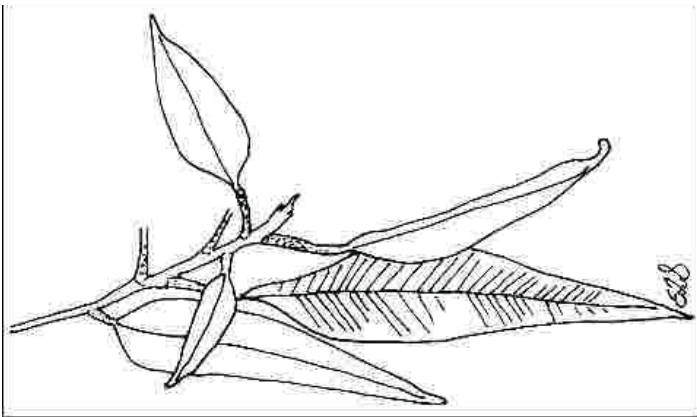


Figure 3. Foliage

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: lanceolate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: fragrant, evergreen, broadleaf evergreen

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: red

Flower characteristics: very showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round, oval

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown, green

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches don't droop; showy; typically one trunk; thorns

Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure

Breakage: susceptible to breakage

Current year twig color: reddish, brown

Current year twig thickness: thin

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; acidic; slightly alkaline; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: unknown

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: resistant

Pest resistance: sensitive to pests/diseases

Use and Management

Propagation is by seed, using ripe seed capsules taken off trees.

Pests

Pests include psyllids, aphids, mealybugs, scales, mites, caterpillars, and borers. Spraying with soap solution or appropriate chemical sprays will often suffice to control all but the borers. Borer damage may require the cutting out and destroying of infested stems and the removal of dying plants. Psyllids disfigure the tree and can be quite a problem.

Diseases

It is resistant to armillaria root rot and to verticillium wilt. They are susceptible to powdery mildew and to *Phytophthora cinnamoni* and *Phytophthora lateralis*.

Leaf spot and crown gall are eucalyptus' major disease problems. Prune infected twigs and branches and be sure to keep dead leaves and fruit cleaned up as plant refuse is usually the source of leaf spot disease.