

Eucalyptus sinuosa

octopus mallee

Eucalyptus subg. *Symphyomyrtus*

sect. '*Glandulosae*' ser. *Lehmannianae* subser. *Conjunctae*

Name: From the Latin *sinuosus* (sinuate or winding), referring to the distinctive opercula of its flower buds.

The common name refers to the octopus-like appearance of the flower buds.

Authority: *Eucalyptus sinuosa* D.Nicolle, M.E.French & McQuoid, *Nuytsia* 18: 209 (2008). T: Peniup NR, south-west of Jerramungup, WA, 7 Jan 2007, D.Nicolle 5061 & M.E.French (holo: PERTH; iso: AD, CANB).

Features: Bushy, multi-stemmed mallee, lignotuber sprouter. Bark smooth. Adult leaves narrow, with blackened lenticels on the leaf margins. Flower clusters on long stalks. Bud bases fused together. Bud caps extremely long, curved, often bulbous at tip. Flowers yellow-green, grouped in large 'balls'. Fruits fused into large groups, with valves strongly exserted (forming 'spiky balls').

Distribution & Habitat: Known from scattered populations near the south coast, from the Corackerup Creek catchment (south-east of Ongerup) eastwards to the lower West River catchment in Fitzgerald River NP. Although the known populations are well scattered, the species is usually locally common or dominant where it occurs. It grows in white granitic sand or gravel on slight slopes or in undulating topography in mallee shrubland. Associated eucalypts include

E. conglobata subsp. *perata*, *E. pleurocarpa*, *E. sp.* Ravens-thorpe, *E. sporadica*, *E. uncinata* and *E. xanthonema*.

Notes: *Eucalyptus sinuosa* is a distinctive species due to its very long, curved opercula (bud caps), which are the longest of any eucalypt.

The species is most closely related to *E. mcquoidii* (Quoin Head mallee), which is known from the Quoin Head area in Fitzgerald River NP. *Eucalyptus mcquoidii* is distinguished from *E. sinuosa* by being non-lignotuberous (it is an obligate seeder), and its generally shorter (though still long, 50–60 mm long) and straighter opercula.

Eucalyptus sinuosa has in the past been confused with *E. lehmannii* (bushy yate, with two subspecies), which is a much more common species, occurring from the Stirling Range eastwards to Cape Arid. It differs from *E. sinuosa* in its flattened peduncles, its broader adult leaves (8–27 mm wide) that lack the marginal lenticels, and its shorter, straight opercula.

Conservation Status: Priority 2: Poorly-known species (Conservation Codes for WA Flora and Fauna, as listed on 10th May 2019). Populations are conserved in Fitzgerald River NP and Peniup NR.



Near Hamersley Drive, Fitzgerald River National Park



Painted seedling from Peniup NR



Description: *Mallee*, to 4 m tall, lignotuberous. Habit spreading. **Bark** smooth, grey to orange-tan, shed in strips and short ribbons. **Branchlets** not glaucous, without pith glands. **Juvenile leaves** petiolate, lanceolate, scabrid, dull, green. **Adult leaves** shortly petiolate, linear, 50–75 mm × 4–8 mm, glossy, green, with scattered blackened lenticels on the margins. **Umbels** up to 25-flowered, held on terete peduncles 45–140 mm long × 5–10 mm wide. **Bud hypanthia** fully fused. **Opercula** narrowly-cylindrical, 50–95 mm long, sinuous, apex usually swollen. **Flowers** yellow-green, occurring mainly in summer. **Fruits** sessile and fully fused into infructescences 25–75 mm in diameter, individual fruits 6–16 mm wide at rim, disc ascending, valves 3, strongly exserted. **Seeds** blackish.

