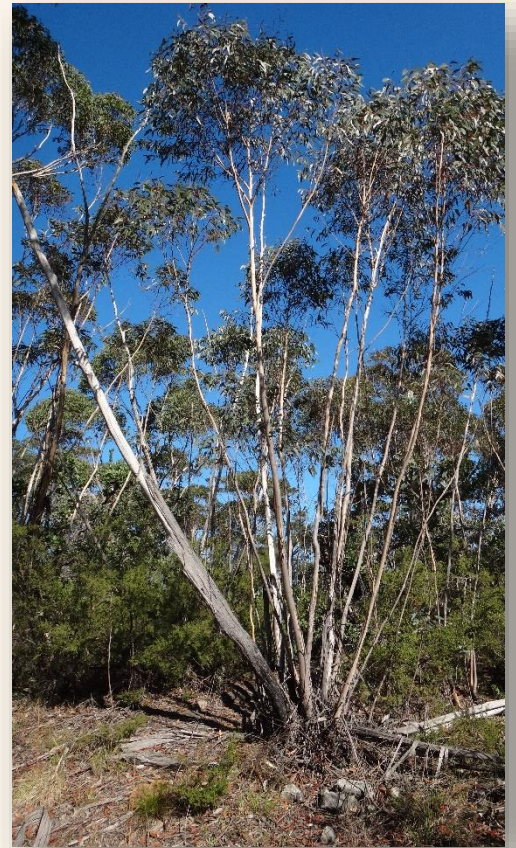


Whipstick Ash

Eucalyptus multicaulis

Whipstick Ash, *Eucalyptus multicaulis* is one of the very few mallee eucalypts that occurs in the Sydney region where it grows on poor, skeletal sandy soil on ridges, often at the margins of broad open expanses of sandstone. In north-western Sydney, Whipstick Ash typically grows about 3 – 4 metres tall, and has smooth, white to grey bark on multiple stems, often with long ribbons of shedding bark. The name *multicaulis* (*many stems*) is appropriate given the growth habit. However, the same species, growing on good soil may well grow into a single trunked tall tree, up to 8 metres high.



Whipstick Ash, *Eucalyptus multicaulis*, in Berowra Valley National Park, north-western Sydney.



Distribution of Whipstick Ash, *Eucalyptus multicaulis*, in south-eastern Australia.

settlers for their hot and long burning qualities. They are still much sought after today. Mallees are thought to have originated in Western Australia during the Pleistocene. They are quite remarkable, and it is estimated that some can live for up to 500 years. They can

What is a mallee? Eucalypts have different growth forms and can grow as trees, shrubs or *mallees*. Mallees differ from trees and shrubs in that they grow from underground *lignotubers* – massive, woody, underground reservoirs – eventually becoming multi-stemmed plants. The underground lignotubers are often referred to as *Mallee roots* and were prized by early



Mallee Eucalypts in Mungo National Park, south-western NSW.

survive incredibly harsh conditions in soils with very low moisture levels and minimal nutrients available. If the above ground stems are burnt or broken off, new shoots will sprout from the below-ground lignotuber.



Mallee Eucalypt, *Eucalyptus dendromorpha*, bordering a sandstone outcrop, Mount Wilson, Blue Mountains, NSW

Mallee is also a generic term used for some semi-arid regions in Australia including north-western Victoria, South Australia and southern Western Australia, where poor, often alkaline soils are populated by mallee eucalypts. The Whipstick Ash is restricted to eastern central NSW, from just east of Rylstone in the northern Blue Mountains, to the Budawang Mountains in the south.

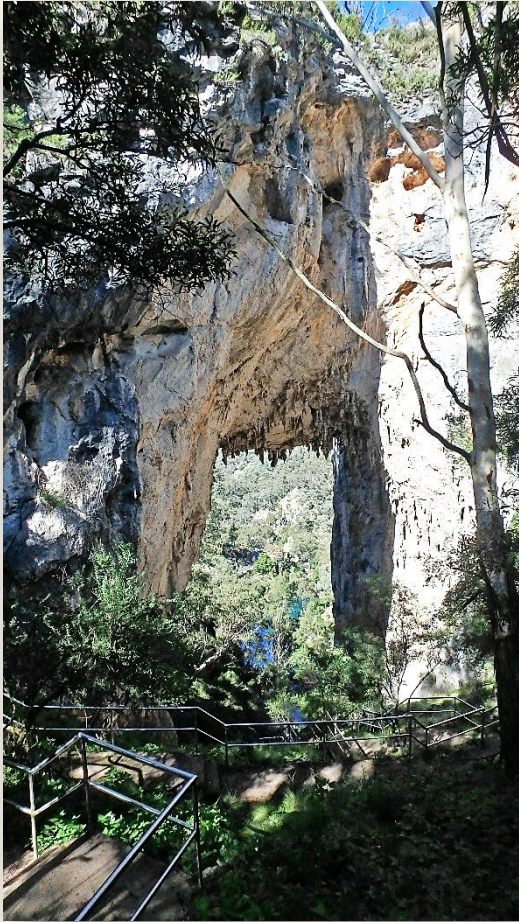


Mallee Eucalypt, *Eucalyptus dendromorpha*, at Mount Wilson, 2 years after the devastating December 2019 bushfire. New shoots are just starting to appear at the base of dead stems.

Whipstick Ash has yet another claim to fame. The **Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA)** was inscribed on the World Heritage list in 2000 for its outstanding natural values, and the presence of almost 100 Eucalypt species and many Eucalypt-dominated communities. The Eucalypts present in the GBMWA comprise 13 percent of all known *Eucalyptus* species (including species of *Eucalyptus*, *Angophora* and *Corymbia*), present in the Blue Mountains.

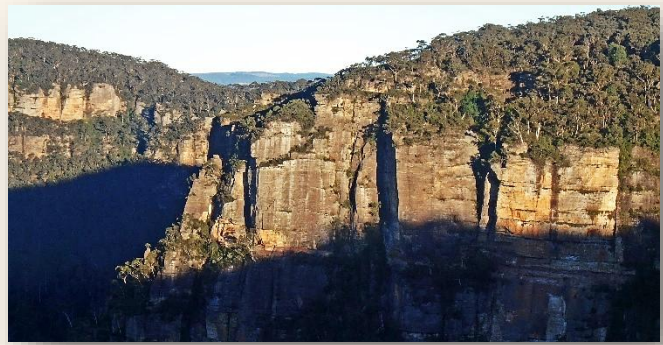


Blue Mountains National Park



Eucalypts in Jenolan Caves Karst Conservation Reserve

These occur in a great range of plant communities, including tall closed forests, open forests and woodlands, and mallee shrublands. The area is over one million hectares and includes seven national parks (Blue Mountains, Wollemi, Yengo, Nattai, Kanangra-Boyd, Gardens of Stone, Thirlmere Lakes), together with the Jenolan Caves Karst Conservation Reserve. Whipstick Ash is found in three of the GBMWA national parks: Blue Mountains, Wollemi and Gardens of Stone.



Eucalypts on sandstone in Blue Mountains National Park.

Benson D, Hager T. 2010. The eucalypts of Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area: distribution, classification and habitats of the species of *Eucalyptus*, *Angophora* and *Corymbia* (family Myrtaceae recorded in its eight reserves. *Cunninghamia*. 11. 425-444.

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water <https://www.dcceew.gov.au/parks-heritage/heritage/places/world/blue-mountains>

Hancock N. 2015. Mallees of the Southern Mallee District of South Australia. A Ute Guide. Nola Hancock.

Plantnet: <http://plantnet.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/NSWfl.pl?page=nswfl&lvl=sp&name=Eucalyptus~multicaulis>

Alison Downing, Nola Hancock, Brian Atwell, Karen Marais, Kevin Downing.
School of Natural Sciences

