

## Plant of the Week

# *Lemon Scented Gum* *Corymbia citriodora*



If you walk through the central courtyard of the university on a dewy morning or after rain, you will be delighted by the scent of lemon that fills the air. For this lovely phenomenon we can thank the university's landscape planners, who, in 1968, planted 120 Lemon Scented Gums in a formation said to represent a *phalanx*, a unit of a legion of the Roman army. Behind each line of men in the *phalanx* was another line supporting the first, so a Roman general could plan the phalanx to be many men deep as well as wide to suit the terrain of a battle site (Karl Van Dyke, Museum of Ancient Cultures, Macquarie University).

Until the mid-1990s, we knew the **Lemon Scented Gum** as *Eucalyptus citriodora*, now it is included in the genus *Corymbia*, together with **spotted gums**, including *Corymbia maculata*, **bloodwoods**, such as *Corymbia gummifera* (**Red Bloodwood**) and *C. eximia* (**Yellow Bloodwood**) and **ghost gums** such as the exquisite *Corymbia aparrerinja* from Central Australia.

Lemon Scented Gums are evergreen trees from temperate and tropical eastern Australia, and grow in coastal forests from north of Coffs Harbour in NSW to Cape York Peninsula in Queensland. Essential oil produced from Lemon Scented Gums in



plantations in Brazil and China consists mostly of citronella, an important component of many insect repellents.

*Take a minute to gently rub your fingers along a leaf and enjoy the lemon fragrance.*

Lemon Scented Gums have become naturalised in many parts of Australia and pose a serious threat in some areas.

**Photographs:** Flower & leaves - **Julia Cooke**

Main Courtyard, Macquarie University: [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)

**Map:** Australian National Botanic Gardens - [anbg.gov.au](http://anbg.gov.au)

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Downing Herbarium

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