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Eucalyptus spathulata

Eucalyptus spathulata has the common names of swamp mallet, swamp mallee, swamp gimlet or narrow-leaved gimlet. The common name mallet, is derived from a native name used for certain tall, smooth-barked eucalypts. Swamp mallee is a small tree usually 15 to 20 feet tall but may sometimes become taller, to as much as 40 feet. Its bark is smooth, red-brown, becoming gray. Mature leaves are alternate, linear-lanceolate, usually 2 to 2 1/4 inches long, 1/8 to 3/8 inch wide, narrowed to a very short petiole, veins are obscure, and noticeable oil glands dot the surface. Bud caps cylindrical to cylindrical-conical, sometimes reddish-brown, 1/4 to 3/8 inch long, are slightly longer than to 3 times as long as hypanthium.

Flowers with creamy-white stamens occur in an umbel of 3 to 7 which has a slightly flattened stalk or peduncle 1/4 to 5/8 inch long. Capsules are rounded or pear-shaped, 1/4 to 1/2 inch long, 3/8 to 1/4 inch wide at its top. The rim is narrow, the slender valves are exerted. Seeds are small and numerous.

Distinctive features of eucalyptus spathulata are:

1. Its small size and upright habit.
2. Smooth bark.
3. Narrow leaves with glandular dots and obscure venation.
4. More or less cylindrical bud caps which are longer than the hypanthium.
5. The exerted valves of the capsule.

Eucalyptus spathulata comes from the southwestern corner of Western Australia south of Perth, along the coast from Albany to Esperance and north to Katanning and Ravensthorpe. It occurs in low lying areas such as seasonal lakes, sometimes in thickets in red sandy or gravelly loam. In this region the rainfall is during winter, as in California, 13 to 20 inches annually, frosts are rare (although more frequent inland) and extreme summer temperatures may be over 100 deg. F.

In Australia it has been found that seeds germinate in one to two weeks and plants are quick growing, making a growth of 18 to 20 feet in 4 years. In cultivation in South Australia it reached 30 feet in about 13 years. It is recommended as an ornamental tree and has been used as a street tree in Perth, Adelaide, Sydney, and southern Victoria. It may also be used as a shade tree or in wind breaks. In Victoria it has been used extensively in wind break planting. It is resistant to frost and drought and adaptable to most soils, even saline and alkaline soils and is suitable for areas with poor drainage because some of its natural

areas are in low-lying seasonally wet areas. Swamp mallee is wind tolerant and grows in soil situations intolerable to many other trees, therefore it should be planted in poor situations where a small specimen tree is wanted. It seems to prefer alkaline, wet soils and performs less well in soils well supplied with nitrogen or low pH levels.