

“One deplorable feature in connection with the [Australian forest] has been the wanton waste of hundreds of millions of feet of the finest timber, subsequent upon the opening up of the country for settlement.

“Enormous quantities of the most beautiful timber have been felled and cast into the fire, and in a great measure this is going on today.

“If settlement is to take place, of course the clearing of the land is inevitable, but it does seem to show a want of business capacity somewhere that the timber could not be marketed.”

R.T.Baker, Curator and Economic Botanist,
Cabinet Timbers of Australia
Printed in 1913

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SMARTimbers
Sustainable Timber Supply



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Yellow Gum

Eucalyptus leucoxylon

One of the fairest gums in form and with a striking red flower, Yellow Gum is much sought after by gardeners.

Hailing from Victoria's south-west, this hardy tree has – as its mundane name implies – a brownish-yellow timber with pink tints.

A habituée of dry woodlands, Yellow Gum's timber is hard, strong and very durable.

Blackwood

Acacia melanoxylon

The most revered of all Victorian cabinet timbers.

Highly variegated waves of chocolate washing through honey-brown timber combined with undulating grain makes Blackwood an extraordinarily attractive timber when burnished to a high sheen.

Nurtured deep in misty gullies, Blackwood has an aura of dignity worthy of gracing the most respected judge's chambers.

Black Wattle

Acacia mearnsii

Regarded by the South Africans as a wonder tree. Every part of the multifunctional Black Wattle has a use. It's a prolific source of tannin, essential oils and pharmaceuticals.

An early maturer, the Black Wattle's timber also has its uses. Fine-textured and light brown, the wood of Black Wattle is very hard and tough.

Although native to south-eastern Australia, we import some \$1.7 million worth of Black Wattle products grown in overseas plantations. Not very clever!

River She-oak

Casuarina cunninghamiana

Kiwi agroforesters have warmly embraced this, the largest of Australia's she-oaks.

Needless to say, though abundant along eastern Australian watercourses, the River She-oak is spurned in its home territory.

Flecked with highlights, the close-grained, dark reddish timber is a delight to behold.

No doubt the New Zealanders will take advantage of our ignorance and appropriate the River She-oak as their own – if they have not already done so!

Red Gum

Eucalyptus camuldulensis

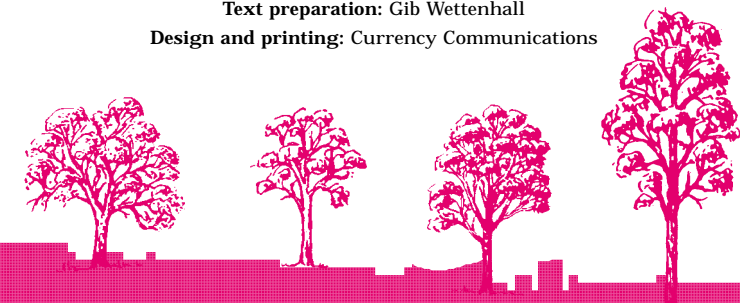
The most widely distributed gum tree across our continent, the Red Gum's distinctive form has become synonymous with Australia.

A truly majestic tree, the Red Gum's tortured limbs and twisted trunks have been made famous by a number of landscape painters such as Hans Heysen.

Difficult to tame, Red Gum has a tendency to take a 'walk.' Still it is magnificent in monumental settings in particular. With its deep lustrous red timber and intertwined grain, a table made of Red Gum makes an impressive setting for a banquet.

Fine Cabernet Timbers of Central Victoria

Timber is one of the last
refuges of the Great Australian
Cultural Cringe.



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**Timber is one of the last
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Cultural Cringe.**

Most Australians know next to nothing about native timber species, preferring to purchase overseas imports from the venerable Oak to the environmentally unsound Teak or Merbu. Yet we have literally hundreds of species of eucalypts, wattles, she-oaks or native pines that for beauty, strength and durability are the equal of any exotic imported timber.

Lack of marketing by sawmillers and hardware stores hasn't exactly helped our native timbers strut their stuff. Native hardwoods are generally lumped under the unappealing acronym of KDH – a term that stands for Kiln Dried Hardwood, and lazily serves to cover a vast range of species that differ enormously in colour, grain appearance and woodworking characteristics.

Once upon a time the wine and cheese industries were similarly represented by their own monocultures of claret and cheddar. But that was 40 years ago. Now they've moved on to positively revel in regional and varietal difference.

That's exactly what we need to do with native timber. So with this brochure of fine cabinet (cabernet!) and furniture timbers of central Victoria, we're taking a leaf out of the wine marketing handbook to highlight the range and beauty of timber found within our own patch – from Messmate and Blackwood in the ranges to Sugar Gum and Ironbark down on the plains.

Blue Gum

Eucalyptus globulus

Blue Gum clippers and whalers were once a common sight ploughing through the waves of Bass Strait. Some could still be seen plying their trade 100 years after construction.

Gutsy, bold, brown and beautiful, Blue Gum takes a high polish – ideal for dance floors as well as decking.

Hard and dense as it is, Blue Gum deserves a higher destiny than its current fate to end up as a humble woodchip.

Sugar Gum

Eucalyptus cladocalyx

A blonde with a fine-grained, uniform texture, Sugar Gum is the perfect complement to the minimalist school of modern architecture.

In a blind testing, Japanese timber merchants selected Sugar Gum as one of their favourites. The Japanese have long had a love affair with the clear-finished elegance of pale, yellow timber panelling

Once you, too, have tried Sugar Gum, you'll understand why.

Messmate

Eucalyptus obliqua

The first eucalypt to be discovered by European explorers, Messmate was documented late in the eighteenth century on an island off the west coast of Tasmania. During the gold rush, whole forests of Messmate went to prop up mine shafts throughout central Victoria.

An ignominious fate for this most abundant of Victorian hardwoods which is visually reminiscent of imported Oak, yet vastly superior. Messmate cuts a very pretty face from honey blonde to pale pink. Definitely worth further exploration.

Southern Mahogany

Eucalyptus botryoides

As its name implies, this timber bears a striking resemblance to Brazilian Mahogany.

Noble in figure, the salmon-pink to dark-reddish glow of Southern Mahogany polishes to a sheen rivalling the best in the world.

A more than worthy replacement for its less enduring northern namesakes.

Yellow Box

Eucalyptus melliodora

Amazingly durable, Yellow Box was one of the first woodland species to all but disappear – down holes for fence posts.

Yellow Box is very everything in the density department – very hard, very heavy, very strong, very durable.

Its light pink or yellowish-brown timber also cuts an extremely handsome figure, having a fine texture and an interlocked grain to add interest.

Manna Gum

Eucalyptus viminalis

Once upon a time, exudations from Manna Gums were a favourite additive for sweetening that cool summer drink amongst Koories.

One of the commonest species in the Wombat Forest, Manna Gum has a delightful rose-coloured timber.

A fine 'pinot noir' and a gentle wood, Manna Gum deserves a better fate than simply becoming an anonymous blushing variant of KDH.

Ironbark

Eucalyptus tricarpa

Even the name is daunting!

You're going to need a titanium-tipped saw and a platinum-tipped drill to bring Ironbark under control. But it's worth the effort.

No fine hairline cracks in the grain that characterise 99% of woods from all over the world. It's like looking at marble.

And it will last 100 years in the ground or as decking.

Shining Gum

Eucalyptus nitens

Up to 90 metres tall with a striking greyish trunk, Shining Gum is mistress of all she surveys in the high plateaus of the border country.

Her straw-coloured, straight-grained timber is easy on the eye and relatively easy to work.

Earmarked as one of the plantation timbers most likely to succeed.

Spotted Gum

Eucalyptus maculata

Regarded by some at CSIRO as the great mottled hope for establishing a sawlog industry from plantation trees in south-eastern Australia.

Spotted Gum is graceful, fast-growing and doesn't crack up under pressure.

A real thirst-quencher, Spotted Gum is ideal for dry sites.

Very attractive fiddleback figure makes this a species to watch out for.

