

Eucalyptus camaldulensis

[Synonyms : *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* var. *obtusa*, *Eucalyptus rostrata*]

RIVER RED GUM is an evergreen tree. Native to Australia it has small creamy-white flowers.

It is also known as Australian kino, *Banh đàn trắng* (Vietnamese), *Blahovičník červený říční* (Czech), *Blahovičník pobřežní* (Czech), Eucalyptus gum, Eucalyptus kino, *Eukalyptus pobřežní* (Czech), Murray red gum, Red gum, Red river gum, River gum, and White gum.

Oil is extracted from crushed leaves.

Camaldulensis means ‘of or from the Camaldoli garden (the Napoli monastery garden of the Italian Camaldolite Christian order where specimens of this species were cultivated)’.

The nectar in the flowers yields a pale coloured, mild-tasting honey.

River red gum is a familiar sight in the landscapes painted by the famous German-born Australian artist, Hans Heysen (1877-1968).

The trunks of some river red gums have been carved. Examples of these (which one only hopes are still standing after the massive fires experienced in southern Australia particularly at the turn of the 20th and 21st Centuries) include some Aborigine carvings. One such tree in Melbourne has been called The Fairy Tree and depicts elves and birds and animals. Others have gained fame in Australian history. These include the Proclamation Tree in South Australia (thought to have been a river red gum) under which the Province’s first government was declared on 28th December 1836. Its remains, that have been held together with steel and cement, have witnessed the annual commemorative ceremony attended by Adelaide’s dignitaries. Another notable river red gum can be found in the Botanic Gardens in Melbourne. This tree was named the Separation Tree in celebration of the establishment of the province of Victoria on 1st July 1851.

Resin, similar to that of Tasmanian blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*), is used both in veterinary practice and in orthodox Western medicine eg. cough lozenges.

However river red gum is most valued locally for its drought resistance and can be found growing in many arid areas where it provides forage, shelter, charcoal, fuel and timber.

On a commercial basis its strong and durable, termite-resistant reddish wood is used for general construction and for making railway sleepers. It is also made into paper pulp, and burnt as fuel.