



Caring
for our
Country

Fact Sheet: **3**

Environmental Stewardship Program
**Box Gum Grassy Woodland Project –
Lachlan and Murrumbidgee**

Identifying Box Gum Grassy Woodland

This fact sheet is aimed at helping farmers and other rural landholders identify Box Gum Grassy Woodland on their land.

Features of Box Gum Grassy Woodland

The Box Gum Grassy Woodland ecological community exists in two forms; those areas with tree cover, i.e. woodland, and those without tree cover known as derived grassland.

1. Woodland

Overstorey

Box Gum Grassy Woodland has White Box, Yellow Box or Blakely's Red Gum (Hill Gum) as the dominant eucalypt species (in the Nandewar region, Inland Grey Box or Coastal Grey Box are the dominant species). Other species of native trees may be found within this ecological community including Red Box, Apple Box, Inland Grey Box (South of the Nandewar region), Poplar Box, Fuzzy Box, White Cypress Pine and Kurrajong.



▲ Blakely's Red Gum (Source: Karen Lummis)

a) White Box (*Eucalyptus albens*)

These trees have pale grey/white box-like bark, with broad spear-like blue-grey leaves and pale yellow wood. This species looks similar to Inland Grey Box except the buds and fruit are larger and often white-waxy. (The leaves of Grey Box are narrower and olive-green).

- White box has finer bark than grey box, more 'paper-like' in texture.
- White box does not take the mallee form in having multiple trunks.
- White box is also distinct from grey box in having broad juvenile leaves.



▲ White Box form (Photo courtesy of Peter Merritt)



▲ White Box identifying characteristics: Bark (© CPBR)



▲ White Box identifying characteristics: Leaf (© CPBR)



▲ White Box identifying characteristics: Bud (© CPBR)



▲ White Box identifying characteristics: Fruit (© CPBR)

b) Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*)

These trees have a spreading dense crown of fine grey-green foliage with fibrous-flaky dark brown “box” bark, often shedding in short ribbons from above.



▲ Yellow Box form (© CPBR)



▲ Yellow Box identifying characteristics: Leaf (© CPBR)



▲ Yellow Box identifying characteristics: Bud (© CPBR)



▲ Yellow Box form (© CPBR)



▲ Yellow Box identifying characteristics: Fruit (© CPBR)



▲ Yellow Box identifying characteristics: Bark (© CPBR)

c) Blakely's Red Gum (*Eucalyptus blakelyii*)

Blakely's red gum has mottled smooth bark, that is pale grey, cream and white with patches of yellow, pink, brown or orange. The leaves are dull green-grey.

Notice from the previous pictures of these woodlands that the tree cover generally has a "park like" appearance with the canopies seldom touching. This is typical of Box Gum Grassy Woodlands.



▲ Blakely's Red Gum identifying characteristics: Leaf (© CPBR)



▲ Blakely's Red Gum identifying characteristics: Bud (© CPBR)



▲ Blakely's Red Gum identifying characteristics: Fruit (© CPBR)



▲ Blakely's Red Gum form (© CPBR)



▲ Blakely's Red Gum identifying characteristics: Bark (© CPBR)

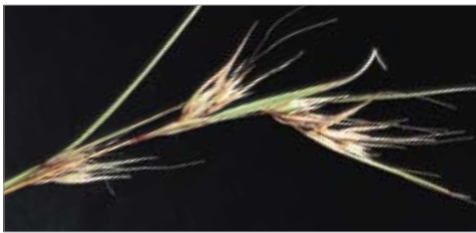
Understorey

Grassy Box Gum Woodlands mostly have a grassy ground layer with few or no shrubs.



▲ Woodland (Photo courtesy of Ian Davidson)

The grasses are mostly perennial tussocks which are often green throughout summer, especially after rain. There may be many species of grass e.g. 15-20 with species like Kangaroo, Red-leg, Wallaby, Weeping and Spear Grass often dominant.



▲ Kangaroo Grass Seed Head (Photo courtesy: Meredith Mitchell)



▲ Red Grass (Photo courtesy: Meredith Mitchell)



▲ Wallaby Grass (Photo courtesy: Meredith Mitchell)

2. Derived Grasslands

These are grasslands that originally would have had a cover of the dominant Box Gum Grassy Woodland tree species. In some cases most or all of the trees have been removed, but the intact grass sward still remains. These areas are known as derived grasslands and are still valued as habitat.

Amongst the grass tussocks many wildflowers may be found providing a very colourful display in spring. Some of the more common wildflowers include lilies, orchids, daisies, native peas etc.



▲ Derived Grassland (Photo courtesy of Ian Davidson)



▲ Wildflowers in Spring (Photo courtesy of Glenda Datson)



▲ Yellow Rush Lily (Source: Matt White)



▲ Chocolate Lily (Source: Alexandra Steven)

3. Where are they found in rural landscapes?

Box Gum Grassy Woodlands are now most often found in the “rough” or “unimproved” parts of properties and may include:



▲ Seasonally wet pothole country: (Photo courtesy: Ian Davidson)



▲ Timbered creeklines and laneways: (Photo courtesy: Ian Davidson)



▲ Lightly grazed paddocks and woodlots: (Photo courtesy: Ian Davidson)



▲ Unimproved hill slopes: (Photo courtesy: Ian Davidson)



▲ Rocky parts: (Photo courtesy: Ian Davidson)



▲ Native Pastures: (Photo courtesy: Ian Davidson)

What is not Box Gum Grassy Woodland?

Floodplains- Low lying areas along major waterways that are subject to periods of flooding and are usually dominated by River Red Gum trees, reeds and rushes.

Foothill forests- These forests and woodlands usually occur on higher slopes, with shallow soils. Shrubs and trees including Red Stringybark tend to be more common in these areas, with a less well defined native grass layer than Box Gum Grassy Woodlands.

Watch out for

Perennial grassy weeds- Some weed species e.g. Chilean Needle Grass, Serrated tussock, Coolatai Grass and African Lovegrass might be confused with native species and should be controlled wherever found. For information on these and other weed species please contact your appropriate weed authority.

How can I find out more about the Box Gum Grassy Woodland Project?

The Lachlan Catchment Management Authority (CMA) in partnership with the Murrumbidgee CMA is delivering the first round of the Box Gum Grassy Woodland project in the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee catchments on behalf of the Australian Government and should be contacted for further information in the first instance.

**They may be contacted on their hotline:
1800 239 453 or email:**

✉ boxgum@cma.nsw.gov.au

Information on Caring for our Country Environmental Stewardship Program can also be found by contacting:

**Caring for our Country Hotline on:
1800 552 008**

✉ www.nrm.gov.au/stewardship/index.html

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