



## Friends of Venus Bay Peninsula Inc

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### Plant of the month: Gippsland, Rough-barked or Coast Manna Gum *Eucalyptus viminalis* subsp. *pryoriana* Synonym: *Eucalyptus pryoriana*



Gippsland Manna Gum *Eucalyptus viminalis* subsp. *pryoriana* is an often multi-stemmed tree, 5 -15 metres tall. It is endemic to, or only found from Port Phillip to Gippsland on near-coastal sands. Bark is rough/flaky on the trunk and larger branches and smooth on the smaller branches. The adult leaves are 10-20 cm long and mid-green both sides. Buds and fruits are typical 'manna gum' like. Buds usually occur in three's, while the fruits or capsules are cup-shaped on a very short stem, with the disc raised in a low pointed dome and 3-4 valves opening above the rim. White flowers occur year round but mainly in summer and autumn.

As has been promoted in the Koala Tree Project, Gippsland Manna Gum leaves are the favoured diet of koalas in our area, being the only eucalypt species that grows naturally at Venus Bay. This fast-growing, excellent shade tree provides food and habitat for birds, possums and caterpillars, as well as koalas. 'Manna' refers to the sugary exudate from the young leaves that provides a high energy food source for tree-dwelling marsupials and was also used by Aboriginal people. The tree was also used for medicine and tools. Gippsland Manna Gums are tolerant of salt-laden coastal winds and extreme temperatures. They are useful for erosion control on sandy sites and respond well to pruning. Propagation is from seed.

All eucalypts or gum trees, of which there are over 100 species in Victoria, belong to the Myrtaceae or Myrtle family. The name *Eucalyptus* comes from the Greek 'eu', meaning well and 'kalypto', covered, referring to the cap on the buds. *Viminalis* comes from the Latin 'vimineous', having or resembling long, flexible shoots. Photo: Lorraine Norden. For further information please visit FVBP website above.