



# Myrtaceae (Myrtle) Family

- Range from evergreen woody shrubs to tall trees from the tropics or subtropics
- Leaves are opposite with dotted aromatic oil glands
- flowers have four or five petals and many stamens
- Stamens are long and conspicuous



Four important groups (genera) in the family Myrtaceae are:

- Eucalyptus***
- Leptospermum***(tea tree)
- Callistemon*** (bottlebrush)
- Melaleuca*** (paperbark)





Eucalyptus





# History of the Eucalyptus

- 1770 Sir Joseph Banks, Botanist on Cook's expedition, introduced Eucalyptus from Australia
- 1853 introduced to California
- Most widely planted nonnative in CA and AZ.
- Introduced for lumber for construction, furniture making and railroad ties
- Oil used for relieving congestion, natural insecticide, cleaning supplies, cough drops and aromatherapy
- Oil dangerous by mouth to humans



## Leaves and Seeds

- Reproduce by seed
- Flowers have fluffy stamen enclosed in cap (operculum)
- Seeds dispersed by wind
- Flowers pollinated by hummingbirds and insects
- Juvenile leaves are grayish and opposite while adult are greenish and alternate
- Many varieties of small tree or shrub for our smaller yards such as Mallees, Coral Gum, Silver Princess, Red Cap Gum, etc.

# Pests

1. Eucalyptus Longhorned Borers-Resin



2. Redgum Lerp-white covering and honeydew



3. Snout beetle



## The Good, the Bad but oh so beautiful

- The Good

- Rapid growth
- Windbreaks
- Reduce erosion
- Thrives in most soil
- Salt and drought tolerant

- The Bad

- Blue and Red Gum release compound inhibit growth of other plants (see San Marcos Growers “Eucalyptus Understory”)
- Understory plants compete for water and nutrients while trying not to be smothered under shredding of leaves and bark
- Crowd out natives
- Highly flammable oil
- Sudden Drop Syndrome



Oh so beautiful



Leaves are poisonous to almost all animals. Koalas adapted to eat.

