

Koala Food for the Gympie Region

Prime Species	Common Name	GLT	Comments
<i>E. bancroftii</i>	Bancroft's red gum	8	Heavy coastal soils
<i>E. crebra</i>	Narrow-leaved red ironbark	5,9,10	Ridges & dry areas
<i>E. major</i>	Large-fruited grey gum	4,5,10	
<i>E. microcorys</i>	Tallowwood	2,3,4,5	Better soils
<i>E. moluccana</i>	Grey/gum-topped box	5,9	
<i>E. propinqua</i>	Grey gum	2,4,5	
<i>E. robusta</i>	Swamp mahogany	8	Coastal only
<i>E. siderophloia</i>	Grey ironbark	1,4,5	
<i>E. tereticornis</i>	Qld blue/Forest red gum	1,2,3,5	Versatile species
Secondary Species	Common Name	GLT	Comments
<i>C. citriodora ssp. variegata</i>	Spotted gum	5,10	Versatile species
<i>E. exserta</i>	Qld peppermint	5,6,9,10	Ridges & silty soils
<i>E. fibrosa</i>	Broad-leaved red ironbark	9,10	Ridge tops usually
<i>E. grandis</i>	Rose/flooded gum	2,3	Only near water
<i>E. melanophloia</i>	Silver-leaved ironbark	6,9	Usually heavy soils
<i>E. pilularis</i>	Blackbutt	6,7	Specialist sites
<i>E. racemosa</i>	Scribbly gum	7,8	Coastal only
<i>E. resinifera</i>	Red mahogany/stringybark	5,8	Coastal only
<i>E. saligna</i>	Sydney blue gum	3,4	Only high altitude
<i>L. confertus</i>	Brush box	2,4,5,6	
<i>M. quinquenervia</i>	Paper-barked tea tree	5,8	Waterlogged sites
Exotic Species	Common Name	GLT	Comments
<i>C. citriodora ssp. citriodora</i>	Lemon-scented spotted gum	5,10	Versatile species
<i>E. dunnii</i>	Dunn's white gum	2,3,4	Better soils

Many of the best forests have been felled for agriculture and pastoralism so it would appear wise to assume that koalas today are faced with food of poorer quality i.e. trees growing on nutritionally poorer sites than in the past. Thus we are faced not only the destruction of the meagre, often discontinuous, habitat that is left, assaults by dogs, collisions with vehicular traffic and the introduction of disease but also with the probability that poorer nutrition may be compounding health problems.

Species popular in one area may sometimes be eaten less in others not just by necessity but possibly due to nutritional interactions. As insurance it would appear wise when planting for koalas to fertilise with N:P:K + Trace Elements including B, Zn, Cu & Cr which are generally limiting locally and even to add soil structure improvers such as gypsum and/or lime and/or dolomite. When planting trees a systematic or random mixture consisting mainly of the best species is recommended with, say, 15 -20% secondary species if these occur in the area together with understorey species such as wattles (*Acacia* spp.) and sheoaks (*Allocasuarina* spp. & *Casuarina* spp.) and a few other local tree species such as red/pink bloodwood (*Corymbia intermedia* or *C. gummifera*).

Spacing could vary from 3m to 6m square but provision must be made for planting far more than would culminate in a mature stand and to arrange thinnings at intervals to maintain vigorous crowns and to favour any individuals found to be preferred by koalas.

Coppicing of trees for fodder *ex situ* (at spacings of about 3mX5m) may need to be done advisedly since plants often produce extra toxins when attacked. A list of known food species follows with a guide as to what sites are naturally suitable, based on the combination of Regional Ecosystems as used in the booklet, *Grazing land types [GLT] of the Gympie district*, by Logan, Elphinstone and Wedlock (Publ. Qld DEEDI) which are as follow.

1. Blue gum flats (Forest Red Gum, *Eucalyptus tereticornis*)
2. Flooded gum (Rose Gum, *E. grandis*) and fringing rainforest on creek flats
3. Rainforests on krasnozems (well-structured, red clay soils)
4. Gympie messmate (*E. cloeziana*) and tall open forest on phyllites (“polished shales”)
5. Open forest on shales
6. Open forest on volcanics and serpentinites (igneous rocks of a very broad spectrum)
7. Open forests on coastal sandstones
8. Sandy coastal plains
9. Gum-topped box (*E. moluccana*) and spotted gum (*C. citriodora* subsp. *variegata*) on duplex soils (pale soils with highly erodible clay subsoils – salt-created)
10. Spotted gum ridges

In addition many other “eucalypts” and several understorey species appear to be eaten, even tea trees, wattles and sheoaks. Some minor species may even be “medicine” trees. It is usual for individual koalas to prefer certain individual trees so that tree removal must be approached with caution e.g. during selective logging practiced in sustainable forestry, trees should be inspected prior to any felling. Koalas also eat soil or termite mounds possibly to absorb excessive polyphenols in their diet.

For further scientific information one should consult the publications e.g. of A. Melzer and R. Cristescu.

USEFUL KOALA CONTACTS

To support local koala projects

Join the Koala Action Group Gympie region. Membership is \$10 per annum, with all funds raised being used to support koala conservation works. For more information, contact the Mary Rive Catchment Coordinating Committee on 07 5482 4766 or email admin@mrccc.org.au

You can also “Like” the Koala Action Group on Facebook 

To report Koala sightings

Download a form to record have a koala sighting recorded on the State Government Wildnet database from www.mrccc.org.au or phone 5482 4766.

Koala Sightings can also be recorded at www.koalatracker.com and www.savethekoala.com/koala-map

Who to call if you find an injured, orphaned or sick koala

Sunshine Coast Koala Rescue – Ray Chambers, 0423 618 740 and MurrayChambers 0431 300 729 or email sckwrqld@gmail.com

Gympie and surrounds - Australian Native Animal Rescue Rehabilitation and Release Association Inc (ANARRRA) Paula Rowlands 5484 9111

Wildcare

24 hour Emergency Hotline: 07 5527 2444 (staffed by volunteers so may not always be attended)