



# BLACK OR BROOKERS GUM FORESTS AND WOODLANDS, AN IMPORTANT ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITY

**Tasmanian Forests and Woodlands dominated by black gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*) or Brookers gum (*Eucalyptus brookeriana*)** is a threatened ecological community unique to Tasmania. Much of the landscape where this ecological community originally occurred is cleared or modified for agriculture or forestry and this important community may be lost entirely if we don't work together to reduce threats.

This community is listed as critically endangered under the *Australian Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and as threatened under the *Tasmanian Nature Conservation Act 2002*.

ECOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES ARE A NATURALLY OCCURRING GROUP OF NATIVE PLANTS, ANIMALS AND OTHER ORGANISMS THAT INTERACT IN A UNIQUE HABITAT.

## WHY IS THIS COMMUNITY IMPORTANT?

Healthy forest communities help to maintain water tables, healthy soils and river condition. This type of forest/woodland supports natural and agricultural production landscapes in many ways:

- Maintains water quantity and quality by regulating the water table and filtering water entering rivers
- Prevents soil erosion and stabilises riverbanks and floodplains
- Provides windbreaks for croplands and pastures
- Prevents dryland salinity
- Provides critical habitat for mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians and corridors for the movement of native wildlife



- Includes bird and bat populations that regulate agricultural and urban pests
- Includes insect and bird pollinators that allow plant reproduction, including crops, and
- Includes soil disturbing animals that promote soil fertility and moderate fuel loads through enhanced water infiltration into the soil, nutrient cycling and distribution of fungi and seeds (e.g. bettongs, bandicoots, potoroos, dunnarts, wombats and echidnas).

Such services are often impossible to replace when natural systems become too degraded.

These forests and woodlands also provide habitat for over 30 nationally listed threatened species (e.g. swift parrots, eastern quolls, eastern-barred bandicoots and Tasmanian devils).

## HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU HAVE THIS COMMUNITY ON YOUR PROPERTY?

Indicated by having either black gum or Brookers gum as one of the main tree canopy species, and they are typically over 5m tall. The vegetation beneath, or understorey, can be thick and shrubby or open and grassy. The community is usually found along waterways and in low-lying sites that are wet or seasonally waterlogged. Black gum and Brookers gum are closely related and look very similar.

The most valuable patches are at least 0.5ha (1.4 acres), contain large trees with hollows, retain native understorey plants or are connected to other kinds of native forests and vegetation.

## WHAT ARE YOUR OBLIGATIONS AS A LANDHOLDER?

If you have this community on your property and are planning an activity that might impact on the condition of the community, you need to seek advice from the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment to check if the activity needs to be approved.

1800 803 772 or [ciu@environment.gov.au](mailto:ciu@environment.gov.au)



Black gum woodland: Photos by Andy Townsend, courtesy of the Tasmanian Land Conservancy

## HOW CAN YOU LOOK AFTER THIS COMMUNITY?

Black gum – Brookers gum forest/woodland has declined in extent by at least 90% and is under ongoing threat from:

- Native vegetation clearance
- Introduced pest animals (such as deer)
- Weeds (which compete for resources)
- Changes to water flow and quality
- Stock grazing
- Changing fire regimes
- Hybridisation with non-Tasmanian plantation eucalypts
- Disease and dieback
- Climate change

As a landholder you can help protect this community by taking the following steps:

- Avoid clearing native vegetation containing black or Brookers gum trees
- Retain understorey plants
- Retain a 30 m buffer of adjacent vegetation
- Fence sites to restrict/reduce vehicle and stock access
- Control weeds
- Revegetate surrounding areas and create corridors for wildlife
- Avoid spray drift and fertiliser run-off reaching the community

## RESOURCES AND ADVICE

Who you contact for identification and advice depends on the type of activity you are planning.

Contact the Forest Practices Authority if you plan to:

- Harvest or regenerate native forest
- Establish a plantation
- Clear or convert a forest for other uses (e.g. agriculture)

Contact DPIPW if you plan to clear vegetation to make a dam.

Contact your local council if you plan to clear vegetation to build.

*For more detailed information on...*

*...the community and its management:*

[www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/nominations/comment/eucalyptus-ovata-tasmania](http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/nominations/comment/eucalyptus-ovata-tasmania)

*...the EPBC Act referral and assessment process:*

[www.environment.gov.au/protection/environment-assessments/assessment-and-approvalprocess](http://www.environment.gov.au/protection/environment-assessments/assessment-and-approvalprocess)

*...the Forest Practices Regulations:*

[www.fpa.tas.gov.au/forest\\_practices\\_system/information\\_for\\_landowners](http://www.fpa.tas.gov.au/forest_practices_system/information_for_landowners)

*...management advice:*

NRM South at [admin@nrmsouth.org.au](mailto:admin@nrmsouth.org.au)

**Interested in joining the Land for Wildlife program?**

<https://tasland.org.au/programs/land-for-wildlife/>



BLACK GUM



BROOKERS GUM



National  
Landcare  
Program



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