

PICTURE 1 Manna Gum



Scientific Name : *Eucalyptus viminalis*

Manna gums can be identified by rough bark at the base of the tree smooth at the top.

Koalas favourite food to eat is Manna Gum. Coastal Manna Gums provide food, shade and habitat for koalas and other native creatures.

PICTURE 2 Habitat Loss



Koala's habitat is going because people are cutting down trees. This is called land clearing. Scientists estimate there is 18% of eucalyptus trees left in the Mornington Peninsula.

This picture is taken in Balnarring Beach looking across a paddock to Coolart Wetlands.



Koalas are threatened by lots of things on the Mornington Peninsula. Some examples of these are dogs, cats, foxes and cars.

Cows and horses can attack koalas when they are searching for food.

PICTURE 4 **Finding a Koala, Safe and Sound**



Koala's have special noses. They can't see very well so they use their sense of smell to find their favourite eucalyptus leaves. This koala was resting in someone's front yard in some palm fronds at Balnarring Beach.

PICTURE 5 **Dangerous Roads**



Koalas can be hit by cars on roads when they are climbing down to get to another tree.

Carry a wildlife rescue group phone number in case you see a hurt, sick or dead koala.

In my science project I want to show other people about koala habitat. I wanted to find out what is threatening koalas on the Mornington Peninsula.

I thought these photos were important because they show other people how important koalas are and how we can help them.

METHOD

I used my dad's SLR camera (Cannon EOS 6D) and phone (Samsung Galaxy) to take the photos.

When we took the photos we had to think about when was a good time. Sometimes we couldn't take a photo because the sun was too bright and made the photo blurry.

For some of my photos I zoomed in. I had to make sure I held my camera still, and sometimes I rested it on something like a fence post. I used the black dots in the camera view to help me take a photo that was straight. I had to focus the camera before I took the photo.

I looked at Google Earth for land clearing next to bushland and then we drove there. It wasn't perfect because we couldn't always see the bush land.

When I found a spot to take a photo, I took a couple of pictures to choose which one I liked.

I edited my photos by making them more bright, zooming in, cropping and adding a filter. One of my photos I changed to black and white because I liked that it made the photo look more scary, and koalas would feel scared by cows attacking them. I also liked it because it made my photo look like an old-fashioned, traditional photograph. I used the photo editor on my dad's computer (Microsoft Photos, 2024.11030.15001.0).

SCIENTIFIC CONTENT

Scientists have estimated that there are 600 – 800 koalas left on the Mornington Peninsula.

One of the biggest threats to koalas is habitat loss. People have cleared 80% of habitat for farm land and development.

Land fragmentation means habitat has been broken up into little parts. When this happens koalas have to climb down to the ground to get to another tree. When they are on the ground they can get hit by car or attacked by dogs, foxes, cats and cattle.

Important trees for koalas on the Mornington Peninsula are manna gum, coastal manna gum and swamp gum.

Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) grow much bigger than the coastal manna gum. They can grow 40 metres high. (eg Ref)

Coastal Manna Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis* subspecies *pyroriana*) grow fast and give shade, food and protection to sugar gliders, possums, caterpillars, birds and koalas.

These trees can be identified by the ribbony bark that peel off the trunk. The leaves are narrow.

Swamp Gum (*Eucalyptus ovata*) grow in wet and swampy areas. They provide nectar for winter feeding birds.

These trees can be identified by the wavy edged leaves and rough bark that peels off the trunk in spring.

Other important food trees are Narrow-leaved Peppermint Gum (*Eucalyptus radiata*), Messmate Stringybark (*Eucalyptus obliqua*), Silver-leaved Stringybark (*Eucalyptus cephalocarpa*) and Snow Gum (*Eucalyptus pauciflora*).

How can we help koalas on the Mornington Peninsula?

- Plant more native trees, especially more food trees like manna gum, swamp gum and narrow leaved peppermint gum. Plant these trees at schools, waterways and fence lines.
- Use koala friendly fences that koalas can climb down and up to get to a tree. Don't use barbed wire or electric fences.
- Drive slowly where koalas are known to live. Drive carefully at night because koalas are nocturnal and hard to see at night.
- Dogs can attack koalas at night because koalas are nocturnal. Check your dog in the yard before leaving them outside at dark.
- Don't use garden chemicals because it could poison a koala.
- On hot days, put a bucket of water under large gum trees.

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