WESTERN AUSTRALIAN TREES.

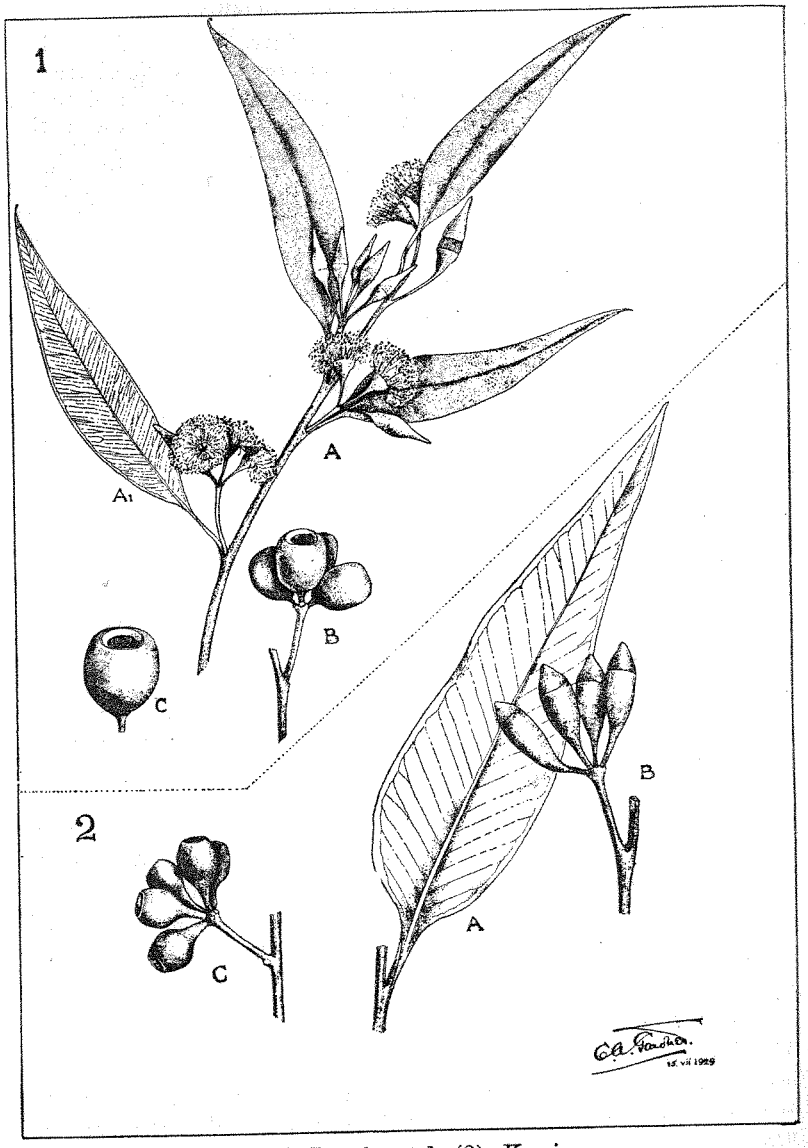
The Karri.

C. A. Gardner, Government Botanist.

Second in importance to Jarrah is the Karri, Western Australia's "big timber," and one of our most useful trees. The Karri tree is one of the largest, if not the tallest of Eucalyptus trees, and ranks among the giant trees of the earth. Those of you who have seen the Karri country at Pemberton, at the Donnelly River, and near Nornalup will not be surprised to hear that our Karri forests have impressed visitors from many parts of the world. For scenic grandeur, Western Australia possesses nothing finer than her Karri forests. Out of the delicate tracery of an undergrowth of tall bracken, of feathery wattle and hazel, the Karri shafts rise sheer and perpendicular, like huge columns of marble weathered to a greyish-white or warm yellow, and blotched here and there with the violet patches of last year's late shedding bark. These shafts are uninterrupted by branch or knot for upwards of one hundred and fifty feet. The crowns of the tree, although the branches spread rather widely, appear absurdly small against the sky above, and resemble, in comparison with the size of the trunks, celery tops rather than crowns. When the sunlight strikes through in sloping shafts in the afternoon, we get the impression of some vast cathedral with mighty well-spaced columns. And the Karri forest is a cathedral, towering above the neighbouring woodlands, heaths and spiky bush. The feathery, cork-barked, moss-green foliaged trees of the undergrowth are the Karri sheoaks, the finest of our sheoaks, but these are dwarfed into insignificance by the majestic Karri trees.

The Karri forests occur in the wettest parts of the South-West, where the rainfall is over forty inches per annum. The timber is hard, long-grained, and stronger than Jarrah. For work above ground Karri is very useful, especially for long beams which have to carry great weights, for flooring, and for wagon work. Unlike Jarrah, it is not durable in the ground. The timber is red, much like Jarrah, and frequently very difficult to distinguish from Jarrah. It can, however, be distinguished by the burning test: a splinter of Karri leaves a white ash, while the ash of Jarrah is grey-black. The Karri leaf, unlike the Jarrah leaf, is not of the same colour on both sides, but is a deeper green above. The leaves are horizontal when on the tree, and do not hang like the Eucalyptus leaves of the drier areas. The drawing reproduced in this number will show you the difference between the buds and seed-vessels of Jarrah and Karri. Of course, the two trees do not resemble each other in any external feature, and will never be confused; but I want you to note particularly the shapes of the seed-vessels and the difference in the bud-cap. In the Jarrah the bud-cap is longer, or as long as the cup, while in the Karri it is shorter and not so tapering. The Karri seed-vessel or fruit narrows more towards the stalk than does the Jarrah, and its greatest width is found nearer the base than the top. The Jarrah seed-vessel is widest in the middle or upper third.

The drawings are half natural size. No. 1 is Jarrah and No. 2 the Karri. Keep the illustration for future reference when dealing with other trees. I hope to give you a drawing of the buds and seed-vessels of each tree as we deal with it.



(1) Jarrah, and (2) Karri.

The scientific name of the Karri tree is *Eucalyptus diversicolor*. This name probably refers to the varied colourings of the outer bark.

Next month we shall speak of the Tuart.