

California's Most Beloved Invasive Plant

Eucalyptus trees, from Australia, may be California's most beloved invasive plant. They were planted by settlers who wanted to set up quick windbreaks and drain wetlands for agriculture.

Less desirably, the aromatic oils in a eucalyptus tree make it highly combustible. And, with its shallow root system, an aging eucalyptus is a massive giant waiting to topple.



"Soft Rain - Big Eucalyptus" 2012 Pastel Painting by Steven Gordon, The Gordon Gallery, Napa.

Even as we phase out the eucalyptus, we can appreciate its beauty. The great white-barked manna gum trees along the highway median—not the usual species of eucalyptus we see in California—have become icons of Napa Valley, appearing in the work of local novelists and artists.

The old eucalyptus won't stand here forever. After it is gone, this panel and painting will continue to display its majesty to visitors.

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