

# Gold Grows On Trees? Sweet!



If you've ever asked your parents for something, but they thought it was too expensive, they might have said, "Money doesn't grow on trees!" This is just a saying which means that it is not easy to earn money, so it is valuable, and you should be careful how much money you spend.

And you know what? Your parents are right! Money doesn't grow on trees.... But gold does!

You'll never find money growing on trees, but if you look on the correct tree you could strike gold! You wouldn't have to travel to some distant planet or some extremely remote valley in the middle of some dense jungle. Not at all. To find the precious metal growing on trees, you'll just have to go to the Australian Outback.

Eucalyptus trees are abundant in Western Australia, an area well known for its vast gold deposits. Traces of gold are sometimes found on eucalyptus leaves. Golden eucalyptus leaves!

For many years, researchers have debated whether the gold is blown onto the leaves from the atmosphere or pulled up through the tree's roots. To settle the dispute once and for all, CSIRO, Australia's national science agency, conducted an experiment.

The researchers compared eucalyptus leaves from trees near a known gold deposit with eucalyptus leaves from trees 3,000 feet (914 meters) away. They also planted eucalyptus trees in a greenhouse. Some of the greenhouse trees were planted in soil with gold in it, and others were planted in soil without gold in it.

The researchers concluded that gold particles are pulled up with water through a tree's roots. The gold then makes its way through the tree's 'circulatory system' and ends up deposited on the leaves.

Please, please finish reading this story before you book your ticket to Australia for a eucalyptus leaf picking adventure. You should know it's only a tiny amount of gold. It would take all the leaves from about 500 eucalyptus trees to make a single gold ring!

Let's leave some leaves for the koalas.

1. If you could, would you pick eucalyptus leaves?
2. What happens to the gold in the leaves after the koalas eat it?