

A TOUR OF FLORA HOTSPOTS IN THE RIDDELLS CREEK AREA.

Suggested one or two day tour from Melbourne to see the Flora and Nurseries of the Western Plains Grasslands, the Foothills of the Macedon Range and the Pyrete Range. The best time to see Wattles is around September 1st, while different stunning displays of wildflowers can be seen on October 1st and November around Melbourne Cup Day.

1. (restored bushland)	Organ Pipes National Park	MEL 3 D4
2. (natural grassland)	Evans Street Grassland, Sunbury	MEL 382 D5
3. (nursery)	Western Plains Flora, Wildwood/Sunbury	MEL 383 K2
4. (nursery)	Green Planet Nursery, Sunbury-Lancefield Rd	MEL 363 B4
5. (restored bushland)	Wybejong Park, Riddells Creek	VR 635 Q11
6. (natural bushland)	Conglomerate Gully Flora Reserve, Riddells Creek	VR 635 O10
7. (natural bushland)	Shone-Scholz Bushland, Riddells Creek	VR 635 O6
8. (natural & modified bushland)	Barringo Bushland Reserve, Barringo	VR 60 B8
9. (natural bushland)	Hobbs Road, Gisborne	VR 78 A1
10. (nursery)	Suntuff Natives Nursery & Garden, Bullengarook	VR 77 J2

MEL = Melway Map Reference; VR = Vic Roads Map Reference

A selection could be made from these possibilities. To see all venues would take at least two days. A minimal amount of walking is required but longer walks can be done at several of the spots. The complete tour takes 1hr 45mins without stopping (starting from Calder Park Drive and finishing at the Calder Freeway, Gisborne) – this information can be used as the basis of choosing your stops and the length of time you wish to allocate to each stop. *NB: Wildlife is in abundance in the forested areas of this tour. Kangaroos and wallabies are commonly seen on the roads in these areas and they can be a hazard. Drive carefully.*

You can find your own way using the Melway and Vic Roads Map references above or by using the detailed directions below.

DIRECTIONS

From Melbourne to Organ Pipes National Park

- From Melbourne take the Calder freeway heading towards Bendigo.
- Organ Pipes Road exit is an exit from the right hand lane. It is soon after the Calder Park Drive exit (700 m) and before you reach the Thunderdome (Calder Raceway). Organ Pipes National Park is signposted.
- *The story of how Organ Pipes National Park came to be is an amazing and inspirational one, and one that has given it national recognition for its revegetation processes. Detailed info about the Park is available at: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~foopnp/> - follow the 'Teachers Guide' link to eventually find the species lists for the park (including nine Western Plains wattles; *A.acinacea*, *A.dealbata*, *A.implexa*, *A.mearnsii*, *A.melanoxylon*, *A.paradoxa*, *A.pycnantha*, *A.retinodes*, *A.verticillata*).*

Organ Pipes National Park to Evans Street Grassland

- From Organ Pipes turn right and rejoin Calder Freeway towards Bendigo
- After 7.9 km, leave the freeway at the first Sunbury exit (signposted Diggers Rest and Sunbury).
- Turn right at the roundabout to Sunbury (Vineyard Road).
- Follow this road, past the Diggers Rest Winery, into Sunbury (eventually Vineyard Road turns into Horne Street) until you reach a roundabout (4.4 km).
- Turn right at the roundabout into Station Street.
- Cross the train line (100 m) and take the first right (Evans Street; 100 m).
- The Evans Street Grassland is on your right with a small garden and entrance 200 m from the Station Street turn off.
- *Evans Street is perhaps the best and closest example of a Western Plains Grassland to Melbourne. It has an almost spooky yet calming ambience that has to be experienced. It too has an amazing story and history, only being re-discovered in 1983 and located right next to the main shopping streets of Sunbury. Detailed information about Evans Street is available at http://home.alphalink.com.au/~cat/evans_st/ - there are two wattle species (*A.melanoxyton* and *A.paradoxa*) but the species list and the land is wonderful.*

Evans Street Grassland to Western Plains Flora Nursery

- Leaving Evans Street Grassland, go back down Evans Street the way you came (back towards Station Street), cross Station Street and continue along Evans Street (through the main Sunbury shopping street) for its full length.
- At the end of Evans Street is a roundabout – turn right at the roundabout on to Macedon Street (NB. Straight on at this roundabout is Rupertswood – the birthplace of the Ashes).
- From the roundabout, continue along Macedon Street (eventually becomes Sunbury Road), past wineries left and right, for 3.4 km and turn left on to the Melbourne-Lancefield Road (signposted to Romsey and Lancefield; this road is locally known as the Sunbury-Lancefield Road).
- Take the first right turn (1.6 km) into Gellies Road.
- Continue along Gellies Road for 4.0 km and turn right into Wildwood Road South.
- After 300 m take the left fork on to the dirt road - signposted to ‘Western Plains Flora’ Nursery.
- *Ian Taylor’s Western Plains Flora Nursery has long been renowned as the biggest wholesale supplier of Western Plains indigenous flora. In 2006 the nursery opened a retail section that is now open Mon-Fri 8am-4pm and Saturdays 9am-1pm (not open on Sundays or Public Holidays; Phone 9740 3178).*

Western Plains Flora Nursery to Green Planet Nursery

- Retrace your steps to the Melbourne-Lancefield Road.
- Turn right on to the Melbourne-Lancefield Road from Gellies Road (towards Romsey and Lancefield).
- Continue for 5.5 km and Green Planet Nursery is on your left (NB. The word “Nursery” appears on the Vic Roads map signifying Green Planet Nursery)
- *Ashley Harding’s Green Planet Nursery sells mostly Australian native plants, numerous West Australian plants, grafted plants and is the source the plant *Acacia cognata* ‘River Cascade’ featured at MIFGS in 2005. The Nursery is open seven days a week (phone 9740 8144).*

Green Planet Nursery to Wybejong Park

- Back on the Melbourne-Lancefield Road, turn left out of the nursery and continue northwards towards Romsey and Lancefield.
- 6.1 km is a turn off to Clarkefield, with a historic bluestone pub and meals.
- From Clarkefield, continue northwards on the Melbourne-Lancefield Road for 3.5 km and turn left at Sutherlands Road (signposted to Riddells Creek).
- Continue for the full length of Sutherlands Road (6.3 km). The end of the road is a T-intersection. Turn right and then immediate left at the next T-intersection on to Main Road (also known as the Gisborne-Kilmore Road).
- Wybejong Park is 500 m on the right (it isn’t signposted but its car park is easily seen and directly opposite the historic bluestone arch bridge).
- *Wybejong Park is a streamside reserve dedicated to native plants in Riddells Creek managed by Greening of Riddell and Parks Victoria. From a desolate wasteland, this is a great example of how a volunteer revegetation program can improve a community’s assets. It is a great spot for a picnic lunch (or pick up lunch from the Riddells Creek Bakery). For more information go to: <http://www.apskeilorplains.org.au/wybejong.htm>*

Wybejong Park to Conglomerate Gully Flora and Fauna Reserve

- Turn left out of the Wybejong car park, back towards Riddells Creek.
- Take the next turn left (400 m; Merrifield St) and immediate left again (10 m).
- This road (the Main Road slip road) turns sharp right after 200 m (Melvins Rd).
- After 700 m, veer left into Wheelwrights Road.
- Continue to the end of Wheelwrights Road (1.5 km; this is a No Through Road - most of which is dirt road) where the entrance to the Conglomerate Gully Flora and Fauna Reserve is situated.
- *Conglomerate Gully Flora and Fauna Reserve is where the Western Grassland Plains meets the hills of the Macedon Range. It has beautiful conglomerate rock formations, a small waterfall (seasonal) and an abundance of fauna and flora, including six species of Wattle (*dealbata*, *gunnii*, *melanoxylon*, *stricta*, *verticillata* and the rare *nanodelabata*). An easy circular walk (about 1hr) will take you through Heathy Dry Forest and Grassy Dry Forest vegetation types.*

Conglomerate Gully Flora and Fauna Reserve to the Shone-Scholz Land

- Go back down Wheelwrights Road 800 m from Conglomerate Gully and you will see partly hidden dirt road on your left. Take this left turn (Royal Parade). It is not signposted.
- Continue along Royal Parade, past the cemetery on your left (1.5 km), then after 400 m, cross 30 m of bitumen keeping left on to the dirt road. This is now the dirt road section of Gap Road. The Shone-Scholz Land actually begins at the Cemetery – there are many tracks leading into the land so feel free to enter at any of these points).
- 550 m from the Gap Road bitumen is the Riddells Creek Winery on your right. This is a good place to park (with excellent James Halliday rated 4.5 star wines).
- *On the other side of the hill from Conglomerate Gully is the Shone-Scholz Land. This amazing block of land was re-discovered as an unspoilt remnant vegetation site in 2003. 167 native plant species have been found there so far (30 more than Conglomerate Gully and over 50 different species from the other side of the hill). It contains 22 species of Orchid and 12 indigenous Acacia species, including two rare wattles (*A.nanodealbata* and the large phyllode form of *A.leprosa*; others are *A.dealbata*, *A.genistifolia*, *A.gunnii*, *A.mearnsii*, *A.melanoxylon*, *A.paradoxa*, *A.pycnantha*, *A.retinodes*, *A.stricta*, *A.verticillata*). For detailed information, maps, a full species list, a key to the wattles on the Land and a map of where to find the Wattles go to: <http://www.riddellscreeklandcare.org.au/> and follow the 'Flora' link.*

Shone-Scholz Land to Barringo Bushland Reserve

- Continue up Gap Road 3.0 km to the top of the hill and take the left fork on to the bitumen road (Shannons Road).
- At the bottom of Shannons Road (2.3 km) is the Barringo Bushland Reserve and picnic areas (with parking areas on your right before the T- intersection and opposite right of the T-intersection).
- *Barringo Bushland Reserve is another great spot for a picnic or a cuppa. The creekside picnic areas and surrounding old growth bush north of Shannons Road (home.vicnet.net.au/~barringo/images/map/map.htm) is gazetted to become a part of the Macedon State Park in 2006. For the more adventurous, the other (south) side of Shannons Road is a hill with great flora and spectacular views across Barringo Valley and the Macedon Range. For more information and a flora list visit: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~barringo/welcome.htm>*

Barringo Bushland Reserve to Hobbs Road

- From Barringo turn left at T-intersection at the bottom of Shannons Road on to Barringo Road (heading towards New Gisborne).
- Take the first right (800 m; still Barringo Road)
- Continue on this road for 7.2 km (through New Gisborne to Gisborne – 7.2 km is the distance to the first roundabout in Gisborne).
- Go straight through Gisborne (ie. across the first and second roundabouts following the signs to Melton).
- At the third roundabout, take the right exit following the sign to Melton (this is the start of the Melton-Gisborne Road)
- After 4.0 km on the Gisborne-Melton Road, turn right on to Hobbs Road (NB. The Hobbs Rd turn off occurs on a left bend in the road and is easily missed).
- *The full length of Hobbs Road is an area of significant native vegetation and a magnificent example of the flora of the Pyrete Range, quite different to the nearby Macedon Range. Hobbs Road Wattles are A.acinacea, A.aculeatissima, A.dealbata, A.genistifolia, A.gunnii, A.mearnsii, A.melanoxylon, A.oxycedrus, A.paradoxa, A.pycnantha, A.retinodes, A.stricta, A.verniciflua, A.verticillata.*

Hobbs Road to Suntuff Nursery

- Continue along the full length of Hobbs Road (9.9 km) and at the T-intersection turn left on to the Bacchus Marsh-Gisborne Road (towards Bullengarook and Bacchus Marsh).
- Suntuff Nursery is 7.2 km down the Bacchus Marsh-Gisborne Road (operating out of the home of Barbara and David Pye at 1220 Bacchus Marsh-Gisborne Road, with a large mailbox on the roadside with 'PYE' painted on it – NB. The mailbox and signage are easily missed).
- *A haven for native plant enthusiasts. Apart from the stunning garden and the stunning views across the Lerderderg Forest, you won't believe the range, quality and price of the native plants for sale. This is a home-based business so if you are planning to visit the nursery (especially at weekends), please ring beforehand to avoid disappointment (phone 5428 9369). More details about Suntuff Nursery are available at: <http://users.ssc.net.au/pyesplants/default.html>*

Suntuff Nursery and return to Melbourne

- Return to Gisborne on the Bacchus Marsh-Gisborne Road (straight for 13.1 km to the second roundabout).
- Turn right at the second roundabout (Aitken Street; signposted to Melbourne).
- Turn left at the next roundabout (Melbourne Road or Gisborne-Melbourne Road; signposted to Melbourne).
- This road leads you back to the Calder Freeway and Melbourne.