

SPECIAL PLANTS FOR AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2021 WITTUNGA

Apart from the species listed below, there is a wide variety of late winter-flowering species to attract your attention along the way. Look for species of *Erica*, *Leucadendron*, *Acacia*, *Thryptomene*, *Pomaderris* and *Hibbertia* among others.



See over page for map

* An Australian native

- 1 *Buddleja salvifolia*** Butterfly bush, mountain sage Southern Africa to Zimbabwe
One of seven South African species, butterfly bush is widespread in forest margins, on rocky hillsides and along stream banks. It is also widely grown in gardens for its sweetly-scented, white to lilac flowers which attract bees, butterflies and birds. Local African peoples used a decoction of roots for a cough remedy, and the leaves for a herbal tea and an eye lotion. It can be found growing on both sides of the path here.
- *2 *Eucalyptus kruseana*** Book-leaf mallee Goldfields region, WA
This distinctive smooth-barked mallee is found only in the arid granite hills south and east of Kalgoorlie. Rather neat and compact when young, it develops a more typical straggly mallee habit with age. It is one of few eucalypt species with a canopy consisting almost entirely of juvenile leaves. The crowded stalkless grey leaves line the branchlets in overlapping, closely-packed ranks, well-described by its common name. The flower buds, mostly in groups of seven, encircle the stem, sometimes forming a bracelet of flowers when the expanding stamens push off the bud caps (opercula) to reveal the yellowish-green blossoms.
- *3 *Calothamnus* sp.** Claw flowers Endemic to Western Australia
Further around in the same bed is a species of *Calothamnus*, also from the family Myrtaceae. The most conspicuous elements of the flower are the many bright-red stamens often combined into four or five 'claws'. The petals are small and fall off soon after opening. The flowers contain nectar, attracting both bees and honeyeaters. The fruit is a woody capsule which is retained on the plant for many years.
- *4 *Acacia acuminata*** Raspberry jam wattle South-west WA
Flowering is usually prolific and the local Nyungar peoples valued it highly for the abundance of nutritious seed (45% protein). They had many uses for the wood, as did the colonists who used the termite-resistant timber for long-lasting fence posts. The common name refers to the aroma of the freshly-cut timber. The flowerheads are in cylindrical spikes of tiny yellow flowers, rather than the more familiar fluffy yellow balls.
- *5 *Hakea francisiana*** Grass leaf, or bottlebrush hakea WA and SA
The buds in the leaf axils of this handsome species open to reveal long racemes of striking pinkish-red flowers. Set against the rich red-brown of the young stems, they provide a long-lasting display in the home garden. The Latin name honours George Francis, the first Director of the Adelaide Botanic Garden, and the common name refers to the prominent (grass-like) parallel veins of its long, linear leaves.
- *6 *Eucalyptus preissiana*** Bell-fruited mallee South-west WA
This low-growing, sprawling mallee is a good example of a eucalypt suited to a small garden. Growing from a lignotuber, it can tolerate pruning when necessary, though some might prefer the more uninhibited growth form of the older specimen seen here. Large, lemon-yellow flowers up to 3 cm across appear in winter and spring, and eventually mature to form the attractive bell-shaped gumnuts which persist on older wood.
- *7 *Citriobatus pauciflorus* (now *Pittosporum multiflorum*)** Orange thorn NSW, Qld
Often unnoticed, tucked away between a *Xanthorrhoea* and a *Melaleuca* in a bed of mainly WA species, this understory shrub from the east coast has small pink-tinged flower buds in the axils of the leaves, and masses of persistent orange fruit. In its native range, the fruit is eaten by Wonga pigeons, and no doubt by other fruit-eating birds. The plant is also a host to the bright copper butterfly.
- *8 *Spyridium halmaturinum*** Kangaroo Island spyridium Endemic to Kangaroo Island
This small shrub with velvety leaves and inconspicuous flowers is a contrast to the more showy species along the way. In this species the head of small flowers, with tiny petals hooded over the anthers, is surrounded by several bilobed, white floral leaves. The dense white tomentum is made up of the stellate (star-shaped) hairs common in the family Rhamnaceae. The plant is marked by a short, painted stake.
- 9 *Greyia radlkoferi*** Woolly bottlebrush South Africa, Eswatini (Swaziland)
The genus *Greyia* is named for George Grey (1812-1898) who was Governor in both South Africa and South Australia. The species name is after Ludwig Radlkofer (1879-1927), a Professor of Botany in Munich. The woolly underside of the coarsely-toothed, lobed leaves give the plant its common name. In its native mountain forests, the dense upright racemes of scarlet flowers stand out against a background of evergreen trees. The wood is often used to make household utensils and handicrafts.
- 10 *Bowkeria gerrardiana*** Natal shell-flower South Africa: KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape
Now known as *B. verticillata*, Natal shell-flower is mainly grown for the contrast of its pure-white flowers against the dark-green leaves. It makes a useful and attractive informal screen. There are no traditional uses recorded, but in its native range the scented flowers are pollinated by a specialist bee which feeds its larvae partly with oil collected from glandular hairs lining the inside of a pouch formed from the petals.