

SPECIAL PLANTS AT WITTUNGA FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2021



Take the time to not only enjoy the spectacular variety of plants on display at Wittunga but also to observe and listen to the many birds that make this area their home.
See over the page for a map

- 1 Niwaki** Cloud pruning
If you look down towards the lake from the LHS entrance of the car park you will see that a number of small trees have been pruned to resemble cloud shapes. This style of pruning is a Japanese method of training trees and shrubs into shapes resembling clouds. Known as 'Niwaki', in Japanese the translation means 'garden tree'. The style is said to depict the distilled essence of the tree or shrub.
- 2 *Amyema miquelii*** Box mistletoe All mainland states
Look up the large *Eucalyptus leucoxylon* (blue gum) and see oval-shaped woody clumps with foliage that hang from branches. This is mistletoe, a parasite surviving on nutrients and water from the tree although it does produce some of its own energy. Negative impacts to a host tree can occur but it is not usually life threatening unless the host tree is dying or diseased. Mistletoe clumps can provide structure, food and shelter for wildlife from its nectar, fruit and dense foliage.
- 3 *Schinus molle*** Pepper tree Arid zone of Peru, Argentina, Chile
The epithet *molle*, is derived from mulli, the Quechua (Incan) word for tree. Traded widely during colonial times, this tree was planted for its wood and for spice production. Its drought tolerance has made it one of the world's most serious plant pests. Tiny white flowers are followed by pink fruits known as 'peppercorns' and are still used as a substitute for true pepper, *Piper nigrum*, which is not related.
- 4 *Serruria glomerata*** Cluster spiderhead Western Cape, South Africa
A vulnerable species in the wild, this plant is endemic to the fynbos zone of the Cape Peninsula. You can see that it is covered with the small hairy fruits that follow flowering. When these fall to the ground, an oily protuberance (elaiosome) is exposed and attracts ants, which then carry seeds to their nests, where they germinate. Seed dispersal by ants is known as myrmecochory.
- 5 *Eucalyptus calophylla x ficifolia*** Hybrid
Look out for the colourful red flowers displayed on this tree. Now known as *Corymbia calophylla x ficifolia* this tree is a hybrid of two closely related species. Hybridisation is a rare occurrence in the wild but in cultivation it is more commonly seen, often due to the nearby plantings of closely related species that have overlapping flowering times.
- 6 *Agapanthus*** Lily of the Nile, African lily South Africa
A hardy herbaceous perennial bulbous plant that blooms mostly in summer. The 900mm high stems have large flower heads with bell-shaped-tubular flowers, in shades of blue to purple or white. The plant is considered a fire retardant, slowing down a fire and as a recovery plant after a fire. Its thick roots bind the soil. In its native South Africa it is attacked by garden pests including a species of the noctuid moth
- 7 *Melaleuca lanceolata*** Black tea tree NSW, VIC, SA QLD
The long lived 5-8 metre high tough tree has dark grey rough bark and dense dark-green low-branching foliage with bottlebrush shaped cream flowers. It flowers in the summer months with an abundance of sweet nectar attracting birds and possums. The young pale-green leaves are covered with soft, silky hairs. Older trees can have twisted and gnarled limbs. Can be used for windbreaks, shelterbelts and shade.
- 8 *Eucalyptus diversifolia*** Coastal white mallee Mainly SA (incl. Eyre Pen., KI, and SE)
A small multi-stemmed eucalypt with smooth bark throughout, or with a little rough bark at the base. Useful for shelter and screening on shallow, coastal soils at sites with underlying limestone and salt-laden winds. Despite its resistance to salt spray, it is not tolerant of saline soils. This specimen promises a spectacular display of the white flowers, popular with apiarists to produce a light amber honey.
- 9 *Correa species*** Native fuchsia All states except NT
Look to the left as you walk and you will see several species of correa. First is *C. decumbens* (SA) a low growing species studded with upright pink bells. Soon after is *C. reflexa* (Qld, NSW, Vic, Tas, SA) which is more upright with smaller flowers. Several others follow. Correas come in a range of shapes and flower colours, including green, and you will find one to suit most conditions in your garden.
- 10 *Adenanthos cunninghamii*** Albany woollybush Hybrid
All species are endemic to Australia, most from south-western WA. This shrub is a hybrid between two other species. Leaves are finely divided and the red flowers are downy on the outside. The genus was first described in 1805 by the French botanist Labillardière. At one time it was promoted as a substitute for the pine at Christmas.
- 11 *Regelia ciliata*** WA
All six species of this genus are endemic to Australia. *R. ciliata* is a spreading shrub from the coastal sands around Perth. *Ciliata* refers to the hairiness of the oval, small leaves. The shrub has terminal rounded heads of mauve-purple flowers over most of the year.