

SPECIAL PLANTS FOR OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2022 WITTUNGA

This month's walk begins in the carpark, before heading off to the Terrace beds (A) then back past the plantings of stabilising grasses and sedges on the southern bank of the lake to the fynbos (F). Note that the bed containing #10 has expanded to the N and NE since the base map was surveyed.



See over page for map

* An Australian native

- *1 *Verticordia plumosa* 'Paddy's Pink'** Wax flower Cultivar
A hybrid between *Chamelaucium uncinatum* and *Verticordia plumosa*, it is also known as *Chamelaucium x Verticordia* 'Paddy's Pink'. This medium-sized shrub produces masses of rich pink, open-petalled flowers, mainly in spring, providing a stunning display in any garden, or in large courtyard pots. It is grown in many countries overseas for the cut flower trade, as well as the foliage which has a spicy fragrance.
- *2 *Leptospermum* 'Mesmer Eyes'** Tea-tree Cultivar
This large-flowered cultivar, was developed in NSW from crosses between three species of *Leptospermum*, including *L. macrocarpum*. Said to be at least 3 cm across, the flowers are initially white, then age to pink. The cultivar name was chosen for the eyelash-like stamens surrounding dark flower centres.
- *3 *Amyema miquelii*** Box mistletoe Mainland Australia
The large clump of box mistletoe hanging from the SA blue gum in this corner of the Terraces is (like all its relatives) a parasitic flowering plant which taps into the xylem of its host for water and minerals, but does its own photosynthesis. Not normally seriously detrimental to their host, mistletoes can benefit other species, providing food, shelter and nest sites for both birds and insects. Records for Australian birds show 33 species feeding on mistletoe fruit, 41 species on the flowers and 245 species nesting in mistletoe clumps.
- 4 *Melianthus major*** Honey flower, touch-me-not South Africa
Racemes of striking reddish-brown tubular flowers appear above the leaves in spring and summer, followed by pale-green pods containing black seeds. The leaves are toxic to grazing animals (and us) but bees are said to make a good honey from the copious nectar. It is regarded as an environmental weed in South Australia and Victoria, so if you have it in your garden, spread can be reduced by disposing of the inflated, papery seed capsules in the green bin headed for high-temperature commercial composting.
- 5 *Greyia radlkoferi*** Woolly bottlebrush South Africa, Eswatini (Swaziland)
The species is named for George Grey (1812-1898) who was Governor in both South Africa and South Australia, and for Ludwig Radlkofer (1829-1927) a Professor of Botany in Munich. The woolly undersides of its lobed, coarsely-toothed leaves distinguish it from the other two species in the genus. In the misty gullies of its native mountain forests, its dense upright racemes of scarlet flowers stand out against a background of evergreen trees and shrubs. The wood is often used to make household utensils and for handicrafts.
- 6 *Arctotus acaulis*** Gousblom South Africa
The magenta and yellow flowers of this fast-growing perennial, ground cover will provide a long-lasting display in spring or early summer, attracting a variety of beetles and bees. The flower stalks arise directly from the root stock. Like many daisies the seeds are dispersed by wind, assisted by a ring of light, papery scales at the tip. The grey felt on the undersides of the leaves was once scraped off and used as a tinder.
- 7 *Erica caffra*** Water heath, sweet-scented heath South Africa
One of the largest of the ericas, water heath may grow as a shrub or small tree which becomes increasingly gnarled with age. When in flower ours is covered with small, white, tubular flowers with a honey scent. At other times, the discerning eye is caught by the striking architecture of its old gnarled stems, supporting a canopy of deep- or grey-green needle leaves in groups of three along the twigs. At home it is widespread, often growing in damp places along watercourses where it has some protection from fire.
- *8 *Corymbia citriodora* 'Marion'** The parent is commonly called lemon-scented gum Cultivar
Corymbia 'Marion' is a variation from the normal form of *C. citriodora*, selected as a seedling by Mr D Ross of Adelaide in 1966. Compared with the relatively sparse canopy at the top of the tall, straight trunk of the parent species, this cultivar is shorter and branches more frequently, forming a dense, shady, canopy more than half the height of the tree. The trees at this site also tend towards an attractive weeping habit.
- *9 *Chorilaena quercifolia* (dwarf form)** Karri oak Cultivar
Look for a group of three small shrubs to the right of a book-leaf mallee. This unusual member of the citrus family with oak-shaped, velvety leaves grows in the understorey of the tall karri forests of southwest WA. Usually pale-green, but sometimes white, pink or red, its delicate flowers are particularly attractive to small nectar-feeding birds like spinebills. The common name is also applied to a she-oak from the area.
- *10 *Eucalyptus tetraptera*** Square-fruited or four-winged mallee Endemic to the south coast of WA
Follow the gravel path running generally SE from the marked junction (x) for about 35 m. On your right are two small individuals of *E. tetraptera* displaying large orange-red, four-winged buds and fruit among leathery leaves, said to be the thickest leaves of any eucalypt. Square, woody fruits develop from flowers with red or pink stamens from late winter to mid-summer. On the south coast of WA, it is a straggly, drought- and frost-hardy mallee to 4m tall, with white, grey or silver-grey bark. **Keep children well away from the inch ant nest near the smaller of the mallees.** The ants are very territorial and have a painful sting and bite.