

## 6. Vegetation in Grampians National Park

### Links to Section 2

This resource sheet can be used as pre-visit information and for park specific application of activities in Section 2 of this Parks Victoria education kit, in particular: Parks and Science  
24. Ecological communities.  
32. Observing ecological communities.

Close to 900 different flowering plants occur in Grampians National Park, forming diverse communities which support a variety of wildlife. During spring especially they create an exuberance of colour.

Approximately one third of Victoria's vascular flora can be found in the park, including over 20 endemic plants, i.e. plants that only occur naturally in the Grampians region and nowhere else on earth. Of the endemic plants that occur in the Grampians, nine are distinguished by the word 'Grampians' in their name. Some of the endemic plants are prolific, e.g. Grampians Thryptomene while others are restricted, e.g. the Rosy Bush-pea is only found at higher altitudes.

### Endemic plants in Grampians National Park

Grampians Thryptomene  
Grampians Bauera  
Grampians Boronia  
Grampians Bossiaea  
Grampians Fringe-myrtle  
Grampians Grevillea  
Grampians Gum  
Grampians Parrot-pea  
Grampians Trigger-plant  
Rosy Bush-pea  
Ribbed Bush-pea  
Wedge-leaf Bush-pea  
Williamson's Bush-pea  
Cassell Grevillea  
Mount William Grevillea  
Narrow-leaf Trymalium  
Hairy Raspwort  
Borya species

Several rare and endangered plant species occur in the park. These include Mountain Bertya, Purple Diuris, Scented Bush-pea, Slender Swainson-pea, Small Milkwort, Spiral Sun-orchid, and Tiny Spyridium.

The incredible diversity of plant life in the Grampians is linked to the wide variations found in its geological formation, topography, soils and climate. The Grampians' diversity is also increased because it is the place where the forested areas of the south and east of Victoria meet the dry mallee country to the north.

There are many different environments within the Grampians, from the sub-alpine rocky heathlands of Mount William and the tall forests of the wetter gullies to the heathlands and wetlands of the slopes and valleys.

**See Section 1: 23:** Teacher notes on plant community descriptions, for an explanation of Bioregions, Broad Vegetation Types and Ecological Vegetation Types.

### Plant communities

The following descriptions explain some of the main kinds of vegetation to be seen in the Grampians.

#### Sub-alpine communities

Moist, cold, exposed sites such as Mount William and Mount Rosea support a dense woodland of Grampians Gum, banksias, Shining Tea-tree and other tall shrubs. Groundcover plants include wildflowers such as Silver Daisy and Mount William Beard-heath.

### **Stringybark forest (= Open Forest)**

Sheltered slopes of the main ranges such as those near Halls Gap support a tall forest of Messmate Stringybark, Manna Gum, Brown Stringybark and Mountain Grey Gum, with a dense understorey of small trees or tall shrubs such as Blackwood, Hazel Pomaderris, and Victorian Christmas-bush. Smaller shrubs include bush-peas and correas. The ground layer plants include bracken and violets, with ferns and tree ferns occurring in the moist gullies.



Hazel Pomaderris © MT

### **Rocky woodland**

Stunted eucalypts and the distinctive Oyster-bay Cypress-pine are found on rocky slopes. Large, bare rock sheets and rocks are also common. Tea-tree, paperbark, she-oaks and fringe-myrtle are the main shrubs, together with Grampians Parrot-pea and Thyme Beard-heath. The rock faces support dense moss carpets, and sundews, bladderworts and lilies in season.



Brown Stringybark © MT

### **Red Gum forest (= Open Forest)**

Open forests of River Red Gum, Swamp Gum and Black Wattle occur on the relatively wet areas with fertile alluvial soils, notably in the Victoria Valley. The ground layer plants include grasses and moisture loving plants such as marsh-flowers, water ribbons and Tassel Cord-rush as well as the insectivorous bladderworts. Silver Banksias and Cherry Ballart make up the shrub layer.

### **Riparian forest (= Open Forest)**

This open forest community can be found in and beside drainage lines. The main tree is Swamp Gum, but Manna Gum and Yellow Box eucalypts are also common, as is the understorey tree, Black Wattle. Paperbark and tea-trees from dense stands with a ground layer of bracken and saw-sedges.

### **Heathy woodland (= Dry Sclerophyll Forest with heath understorey )**

This widespread community occurs on the fringes of the ranges where soils are well drained and infertile. Brown Stringybark and Shining Peppermint are the most common eucalypts. The diverse understorey contains heaths, wattles, peas, grevilleas, hakeas, sedges and a wealth of orchids.

### **Heathland**

A wide diversity of low shrubs and wildflowers form the extensive heathlands in the Victoria Valley and elsewhere on seasonally waterlogged, sandy soil. Common species include Heath Tea-tree, Prickly Tea-tree, Silver Banksia, sedges, rushes, parrot peas and a variety of heaths. Grass Trees are common in some areas of heathland. Trees are generally absent and grasses are rare.