

# FLORA & FAUNA

## along the Bibbulmun Track



There are thousands of native wildlife species that occur in the south-west of Western Australia. This region known as the South-West Botanic Province is one of the world's 34 terrestrial hotspots for conservation priority.

This document is a guide to some of the most common native flora and fauna you are likely to see when walking along the Bibbulmun Track.

In general terms the Track's environmental habitat and species diversity can be roughly divided into three eco-regions.

They are.....

- **Darling Range Jarrah/Marri Forest Region** Kalamunda - Balingup
- **Karri Forests Region** Balingup - Northcliffe
- **South Coastal, Forest Hinterland & Wetlands Region** Northcliffe - Albany

You are currently in the

**South Coastal, Forest Hinterland and Wetlands Region**



## mammals



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### Quokka

*Setonix brachyurus*

This is a small marsupial in the macropod family and is mainly nocturnal. It weighs 2.5-5kg and is 40-90cm long with a short 25-30cm tail. It has a stocky build, rounded ears and a short, broad head. Although looking rather like a very small kangaroo, it can climb small trees. Its coarse fur is a grizzled brown colour fading to buff underneath. On Rottnest Island (off the west coast near Fremantle) the quokka seems to have little fear of humans and is possible to approach closely. However, this is not the case with quokkas of the south-west of Western Australia. It is also illegal to handle these animals.



### Western Grey Kangaroo

*Macropus fuliginosus*

This is one of the larger kangaroo species in Australia. It weighs 28-54kg, its length is 0.8-1.1 metres with a 0.8-1.0 metres tail and stands some 1.3 metres tall. It has thick, coarse fur with colours ranging from pale grey to brown. Its throat, chest and belly have a paler colour. It feeds at night, but also late afternoon and early morning, mainly on grasses and on leafy shrubs and low trees. They live in groups of up to 15 called a "mob".



### Southern Right Whale

*Eubalaena australis*

This mammal is readily distinguished by rough, calcified skin patches found on their heads, a broad back without a dorsal fin, and a long arching mouth that begins above the eye. Its skin is very dark grey or black, occasionally with some white patches on the belly. Some 10,000 are spread throughout the southern part of the Southern Hemisphere. The length of an adult female is about 15 metres and can weigh up to 47 tonnes. The best time you are likely to view the whale is usually June to September.



© by ZooPro

### Water Rat or Rakali

*Hydromys chrysogaster*

This is an Australian native rodent. It lives in burrows on river banks, lakes and estuaries and feeds on insects, fish, crustaceans, mussels, snails, frogs, birds' eggs and water birds. Generally nocturnal it may also be active during the day. Trekkers should be aware that they will seek food from packs. Its body is 23-37cm, weighs 34-130gm and has a thick tail measuring around 24-34cm. They have webbed hind legs for swimming, waterproof fur, a flattened head, a long blunt nose, many whiskers and small ears and eyes. They are black to brown in colour with an orange to white belly, and dark tail with a white tip.

# birds



© by JJ Harrison

**Pacific Gull**  
*Larus pacificusi*

This is a very large gull, native to the coasts of Australia. It is moderately common along the south coast. Much larger than the silver gull, pacific gulls are usually seen alone or in pairs, steadily patrolling above the shoreline. They sometimes zoom high on the breeze to drop shellfish or sea urchins onto rocks in order to crack them for food.



© by Flying Freddy

**New Holland Honeyeater**  
*Phylidonyris novaehollandiae*

This bird is around 18cm long and is mainly black, with white facial tufts and yellow margins on its wing and tail feathers. It is a very active bird and rarely sits long enough to give an extended view. When danger approaches, such as a bird of prey, a group of honeyeaters will form together and give a warning alarm. Females appear similar but slightly smaller.



**Western Rosella**  
*Platycercus icterotis*

Also known as the stanley rosella it is the smallest rosella found in the south-west of Western Australia. Its habitat is the eucalypt forests. They are 25–30cm in length and weigh 28–80gm. They are red from the head to the breast, have cream or yellow cheeks and blue and green patterned wings. Males are slightly larger and have more vibrant yellow cheeks. Their bills are a grey colour.



**Australian Pelican**  
*Pelecanus conspicillatus*

In flight the pelican is a magnificent sight with a wingspan of up to 2.6 metres. They weigh 4.5–7.7kg. Its pale pink bill is enormous, the largest bill in the avian world. It is mainly white with black wings. They feed by plunge-diving for fish, but will also consume birds and scavenge for scraps. They often work in groups to drive fish to shallow water where they snatch their prey.

# flora: trees



**Red Tingle**  
*Eucalyptus jacksonii*

Height: up to 75m  
Flowers: Jan-Mar

This massive and very tall tree can measure up to 24 metres round at the base, grow to massive heights and live for up to 400 years. They often have shallow root systems and grow a buttressed base. Forest fires often act to hollow out the base of the trees creating a large cavity. The distribution of the species has been shrinking due to climate change over millions of years. They are now found primarily in Walpole-Nornalup National Park and in a few isolated sites in the Walpole area. Currently the largest red tingle is Giant Tingle Tree in the Valley of Giants, Walpole-Nornalup National Park.



© by Gordon Edwards

**Peppermint**  
*Agonis flexuosa*

Height: up to 10m  
Flowers: Jul-Dec

This is a very common species, and is one of the most recognisable local trees, being commonly grown in parks and on road verges in Perth and throughout the south-west of Western Australia. It occurs mainly as a small and robust tree, although it may grow to 15 metres. It has fibrous, brown bark, long, narrow, dull green leaves, and has tightly clustered small, white flowers. It grows in a weeping habit. Its leaves are narrow and reach a length of 150mm. It is most readily identified by the powerful smell of peppermint emitted when the leaves are crushed.





**Jarrah**  
*Eucalyptus marginata*

Height: up to 40m  
Flowers: Dec-Apr

Probably the most famous of our hard woods, the timber from the jarrah tree is highly sought after for its excellent building and magnificent furniture making qualities. Originally known as Swan River mahogany its dark red colour is a wonderful feature. It has long streaky grey coloured bark, its flowers are white and its nuts are 1cm across with three valves. Jarrah trees often fall victim to dieback disease. Before the area was intensely logged some jarrah trees had massive 2 metre thick trunks and were more than 400 years old. Today, most of the jarrah trees in the region are subsequent regrowth forest. In the southern most areas jarrah trees tend to be shorter and more stunted.



**Red Flowering Gum**  
*Corymbia ficifolia*

Height: up to 10m  
Flowers: Jan-May

Also known as Albany red flowering gum this spectacular flowering eucalypt is one of the most commonly planted ornamental trees in the broader eucalyptus family. It is native to a very small area of south coast of Western Australia, measuring just tens of square kilometres, located to the east of Walpole. Despite its small habitat it is not considered under threat in the wild.



**Bull Banksia**  
*Banksia grandis*

Height: up to 10m  
Flowers: Sept-Jan

Along the south coast of Western Australia, this species often grows in a shorter, stunted manner due to the severe onshore salty winds blowing off the Southern Ocean. It grows to a greater height in protected areas. Its rounded and woody cones are typical of many other banksia tree species. The hundreds of small flowers in each cylindrical flower head are an excellent food source providing nectar for insects, birds and small possums. Its seeds are enjoyed by cockatoos and parrots. Unfortunately it succumbs easily and quickly to dieback disease.



**Saltwater Paperbark**  
*Melaleuca cuticularis*

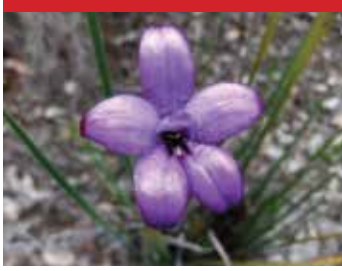
Height: up to 7m  
Flowers: Aug-Nov

Commonly known as the saltwater paperbark this tree is in the myrtle family and is native to the south-west of Western Australia. It often appears as a shrub but sometimes develops into a much taller tree. The leaves are linear to oblong, grey-green to dark green in colour, 0.5-1.2cm long and 1.5-3mm wide. The trunk is covered in a pale papery bark which helps to protect the tree during fire.



# flora: wildflowers

Please note that the flowering months for wildflowers differ a great deal. Although the vast majority flower during the spring months of Aug to Nov, many flower at other times during the year. The weather, especially rain and temperature can also determine the flowering period.



**Purple Enamel Orchid**  
*Elythrhanthera brunonis*

**Height:** 12-25cm  
**Flowers:** October-December

This is a tuberous, perennial plant with flowers that have bright shining purple petals. The underside is spotted. It is very common in jarrah forest areas and likes moist sites, coastal swamps and creeks.



**Pink Enamel Orchid**  
*Elythrhanthera emarginata*

**Height:** 15-30cm  
**Flowers:** August-October

A tuberous, perennial orchid with flowers that have bright shining pink petals. The underside is patchy. This species is more scattered than its cousin, the purple enamel orchid.



**Royal Robe**  
*Scaevola calliptera*

**Height:** 10-40cm  
**Flowers:** September-December

This is a prostrate creeping perennial plant and resembles a very beautiful ground cover with its stunning blue/purple flowers. It grows in sand often with gravel.



**Shrub Persoonia**  
*Persoonia angustiflora*

**Height:** 0.2-2.0 metres  
**Flowers:** September-November

This is an erect, but occasionally spreading shrub with long skinny leaves. Its flowers are mainly yellow. It grows mainly in sand in the undulating wet plains.



**Cowslip Orchid**  
*Caladenia flava*

**Height:** 10-25cm  
**Flowers:** July-December

This is a tuberous, perennial orchid with yellow to white flowers often with red markings. It belongs to the spider orchid genus and grows in a variety of soils including gravel, sand, open areas, forests, granite outcrops and sand.



**Foxtails**  
*Andersonia caerulea*

**Height:** 5-95cm  
**Flowers:** January-December

This is a small and erect or spreading woody shrub. It has stunning dense pink, purple and blue spiky flowers. They often appear in large patches and make a beautiful display. They mainly grow in a sandy environment.



**Albany Bottlebrush**  
*Callistemon glaucus*

**Height:** 1.0-3.0 metres  
**Flowers:** September-December

This is one of only 2 true species of bottlebrush in WA, the other being the lesser bottlebrush (*Callistemon phoeniceus*). It has beautiful bright red flowers and is found in patches along the south coastal areas particularly near swamps.



**Aniseed Boronia**  
*Boronia crenulata*

**Height:** 0.25-1.2 metres  
**Flowers:** May-December

With masses of stunning pink/red flowers this is a woody stemmed small shrub. It mainly grows in sandy and gravelly soils in wet and swampy sites.



**Southern Cross Flower**  
*Xanthosia rotundifolia*

**Height:** 35-80cm  
**Flowers:** various

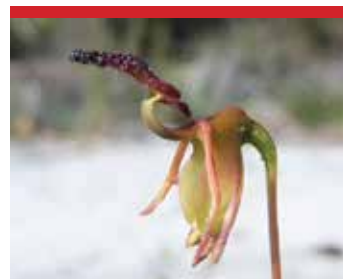
Mainly found along the south coast of Western Australia this shrub has a very curious white crossed flower head. It mainly enjoys sandy soils alongside swamps and creeks.



**Tree Hovea**  
*Hovea elliptica*

**Height:** 0.4-3.0 metres  
**Flowers:** August-December

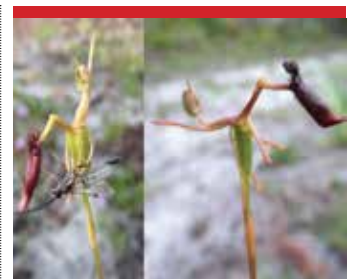
This is a slender, erect shrub or small tree with stunning displays of blue- purple and white flowers. It prefers gravel, clay loam and sandy soils. It grows on rocky slopes, granite outcrops, sand dunes, slopes and ridges.



**Flying Duck Orchid**  
*Paracaleana nigrita*

**Height:** 5-19cm  
**Flowers:** August-October

This is one of the most unusual species of orchid in the south-west of Western Australia. It is a common tuberous, perennial plant with shades of red and green flowers. It enjoys grey-white sand and shallow soils in winter-wet swampy areas.



**Narrow-lipped Hammer Orchid**  
*Drakaea thynniphila*

**Height:** 25-40cm  
**Flowers:** September-October

Again, a very odd shaped flower head to this tuberous, perennial plant. It is pollinated by wasps that are sexually tricked by the plant's pheromone. It grows in sandy open areas around swamps.





**King-in-his-carriage Orchid**  
*Drakaea glyptodon*

**Height:** 10-35cm  
**Flowers:** August-October

Equally peculiar like the narrow-lipped hammer orchid this is also quite common growing in winter-wet sandy, swamp margins. It is a tuberous, perennial plant with very odd red, green and yellow flower heads.



**Water Bush**  
*Bossiaea aquifolium*

**Height:** 0.6-8.0 metres  
**Flowers:** July-November

This can be described as a large shrub or a small tree. It is prolific and when in flower is quite spectacular with its massive orange/yellow and red/brown displays.



**Coral Vine**  
*Kennedia coccinea*

**Height:** climber  
**Flowers:** August-November

This is a prolific and vigorous climber with leaves that divide into three distinct lobes. The attractive red, yellow, orange or pink flowers appear in clusters of up to 20 flower heads.



**Curry Flower**  
*Lysinema ciliatum*

**Height:** 0.1-1.6 metres  
**Flowers:** May-December

This is a common erect shrub with distinctive white, cream, pink and brown flower spikes. By rubbing the flowers it will release a curry-like aroma. It grows in a variety of soils and in particular along coastal sand dunes.



**Sticky Tailflower**  
*Anthocercis viscosa*

**Height:** 0.5-3.0 metres  
**Flowers:** August-December

This can be very hardy and tall, woody shrub with large distinctive white flowers with pointed petals. It enjoys growing on the sand dunes along the south coast.



**Woodbridge Poison**  
*Isotoma hypocrateriformis*

**Height:** 8-60cm  
**Flowers:** September-December

This is an erect, succulent annual. It varies greatly in colour from white to deep purple. It grows throughout the south-west of Western Australia in a variety of environments.



**Sedge species**

There is a very wide variety of sedges throughout the south-west of Western Australia. Some have quite spectacular flowering displays. Generally they have long slender sword shaped leaves. Some species' leaves are razor sharp and will easily cut a hand or leg. They often enjoy damp areas.



**Wild Geranium**  
*Pelargonium australe*

**Height:** 10-50cm  
**Flowers:** September-December

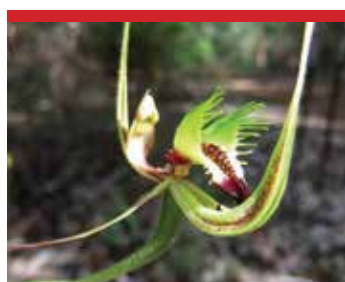
This sprawling perennial plant, is endemic Western Australia. It is somewhat similar to a pesty, introduced geranium species from South Africa. Mainly, it has pink, purple and white flowers.



**Tall Banjine**  
*Pimelea longiflora*

**Height:** 0.3-1.3 metres  
**Flowers:** August-December

Although appearing rather spindly this species can put on spectacular displays with its tall stems and larger white/cream flowers. It grows in sand, sandy clay, quartzite and along stony ridges and winter-wet swampy flats.



**Forest Mantis Orchid**  
*Caladenia attingens*

**Height:** 20-45cm  
**Flowers:** October-November

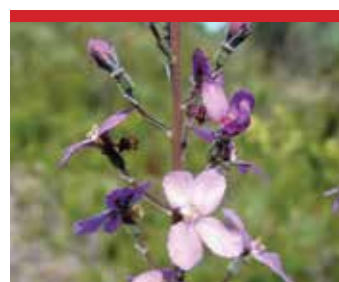
This is another member of the spider orchid genus. It has an intricate and quite spectacular flower head with its green and yellow colourings and red markings. It is a tuberous, perennial plant that grows in sand, gravelly loam, shallow soils and around granite outcrops.



**Coastal Banjine**  
*Pimelea ferruginea*

**Height:** 0.3-1.5 metres  
**Flowers:** August-January

This prolific, erect, dense shrub is a most spectacular sight along the coastal regions. Its large flower heads vary from light to very dark pink. It grows mainly along the sandy coastal dunes and rocky headlands.



**Lovely Triggerplant**  
*Stylidium amoenum*

**Height:** 10-50cm  
**Flowers:** September-December

This widespread species is a strong, rosetted, perennial plant with long vertical flower stems. Its flowers are mainly purple in colour.





**Hairy Triggerplant**  
*Stylidium hirsutum*

**Height:** 12-60cm  
**Flowers:** October-December

This is a rosetted perennial plant with tufted, linear leaves (2.5-50cm long, 0.5-3mm wide). The flowers are usually bright pink and they grow on sandy hillsides, plains, depressions and granite outcrops.



**Pink Fairies**  
*Caladenia latifolia*

**Height:** 20-45cm  
**Flowers:** August-October

This prolific orchid species is found in many areas throughout the south-west of WA. It is a tuberous, perennial plant with shades of pink and white flowers. Dozens can be found growing in colonies. It thrives in sand and loam and is often found around rocky outcrops.



**Pale Beaked Triggerplant**  
*Stylidium fasciculatum*

**Height:** 20-60cm  
**Flowers:** October-December

Often appearing in a rounded shape this erect plant has copious pink and yellow flowers. It grows in sandy soils, near winter-wet swampy areas.



**Cow Kicks**  
*Stylidium schoenoides*

**Height:** 15-50cm  
**Flowers:** August-November

This is a strong and quite spectacular perennial plant. Its leaves are tufted and linear (14-35cm long, 1-1.8mm wide). Compared with other triggerplants it has a larger flower head. Flowers appear white to cream. They are a very widespread species.



**Bracken Fern**  
*Pteridium esculentum*

**Height:** 0.5-2.0 metres  
**Flowers:** no flower

This prolific species is found in many countries. It is an ancient, rhizomatous and perennial fern with large divided fronds. Being a fern it does not have flowers. In particular it thrives in winter wet areas such as creeks in eucalypt forests.



**Balga, Gras tree, Blackboy**  
*Xanthorrhoea preissii*

**Height:** up to 5 metres  
**Flowers:** July-December

This is a perennial gras tree with a flower spike of 1.5-2.5 metres in length and displays white-cream flowers that mainly grow on the sun side of the flower spike. It is versatile, growing in grey to black sands, grey-brown loam, brown sandy clay and gravelly soils.



**Tall Kangaroo Paw**  
*Anigozanthos flavidus*

**Height:** 0.5-3.0 metres  
**Flowers:** November-January

This is a most common rhizomatous, perennial plant which can grow in large clumps. Its flowers are a combination of yellow, green, brown and red. It grows in sand and gravelly areas alongside wetlands creeks and roadside gutters.



**Albany Catpaw**  
*Anigozanthos preissii*

**Height:** 15-80cm  
**Flowers:** October-November

This is a rhizomatous, perennial plant with yellow, orange and red flowers.



**Thick-leaved Fan-flower**  
*Scaevola crassifolia*

**Height:** 0.1-2.0 metres  
**Flowers:** July-December

This species appears along much of Western Australia's coast. It is a hardy erect shrub that grows in impenetrable thickets on sand dunes. It provides excellent protection for small mammals and birds. It has a strong pungent odor and its flowers are a combination of white, blue and purple shades.



**Coastal Pigface**  
*Carpobrotus virescens*

**Height:** 10-30cm  
**Flowers:** June-December

This species is very common along the coastal sand dunes. It is a succulent prostrate, perennial plant and can spread up to 3 metres wide. It has purple to pink flowers. It is an excellent sand dune stabilizer. A similar pesty South African species with a yellow flower also grows along the coast.



**Tapeworm Plant**  
*Platysace compressa*

**Height:** 15-100cm  
**Flowers:** September-December

This can be an erect or sprawling, perennial shrub with copious white-cream flowers. It has a widespread habitat throughout the south-west of Western Australia and is commonly found growing along the dunes, granite hills and rocky outcrops.



**Pingerup Plains**

One of the most spectacular wildflower areas along the Bibbulmun Track is the Pingerup Plains. These lowlands can be inundated with water for several months. To the observant trekker this is a wildflower heaven with hundreds of species all fighting for space. The most picturesque time is during the spring months (August-November).



# reptiles



Photographer: Robert W G Jenkins  
© Australian Museum

## Tiger Snake *Notechis scutatus*

This is a venomous snake, potentially fatal to humans. It can be olive, yellow, orange-brown or jet-black. The underside of the snake is light yellow or orange. Individuals can also show seasonal variations. They can grow to a total length of 2.9 metres. Tolerant of low temperatures, this snake may be active on warmer nights. When threatened, they will flatten their bodies and raise their heads above the ground to a classic pre-strike position.



## Burton's Legless Lizard *Lialis burtonisi*

These lizards lack forelegs and have only rudimentary hind legs and so are referred to as "legless lizards". Similar to snakes these reptiles have functionally similar adaptations such as the ability to swallow relatively large prey whole. Legless lizards lack venom glands, cannot constrict prey, have a fleshy tongue rather than a forked tongue and have visible ear holes.



© Ken & Nyetta

## King's Skink *Egernia kingii*

These reptiles live in coastal areas with open forest and open heath. It is a large, heavy-bodied black skink that can reach a length of 55cm. It consumes mostly softer plant matter from the range of local vegetation, but supplements its diet with insects and birds' eggs. They are prey for many animals including tiger snakes.



© Michael Wifall

## Carpet Python *Morelia spilota imbricata*

This species varies from a greenish-brown to a blackish-brown with numerous irregular cream or yellow to pale brown blotches. Its belly is white to cream and feeds on small mammals, birds and the occasional reptile. It is mainly nocturnal but is sometimes seen basking in the sun. It lays eggs and cares for them until they hatch. After the young emerge they are left to fend for themselves. It is a non-venomous reptile but can inflict a nasty bite that easily infects, so do not handle them. Habitat destruction is a major threat to the python. Bushfires, feral cats and foxes are also threats.

# frogs, insects, fungi and spiders

Along with the species of mammals, birds, trees, wildflowers and reptiles there are many thousands of other species of native wildlife in the south west of Western Australia. Frogs, insects, fungi and spiders are an extremely important and integral part of the total eco-system that keeps the wildlife in balance. **Some species include:**

## FROGS



motorbike, squelching, moaning, quacking, slender tree, western banjo, whooping

## INSECTS



ants and termites, butterflies, wasps, dragonflies, cicadas, crusader bugs, preying mantis

## FUNGI



mushrooms, coral, shelf, beefsteak, bracket, jelly, puffballs, earth tongues

## SPIDERS



orb weaver, huntsman, red back, daddy long legs, jewel, garden, mouse, trap door

# bush tucker

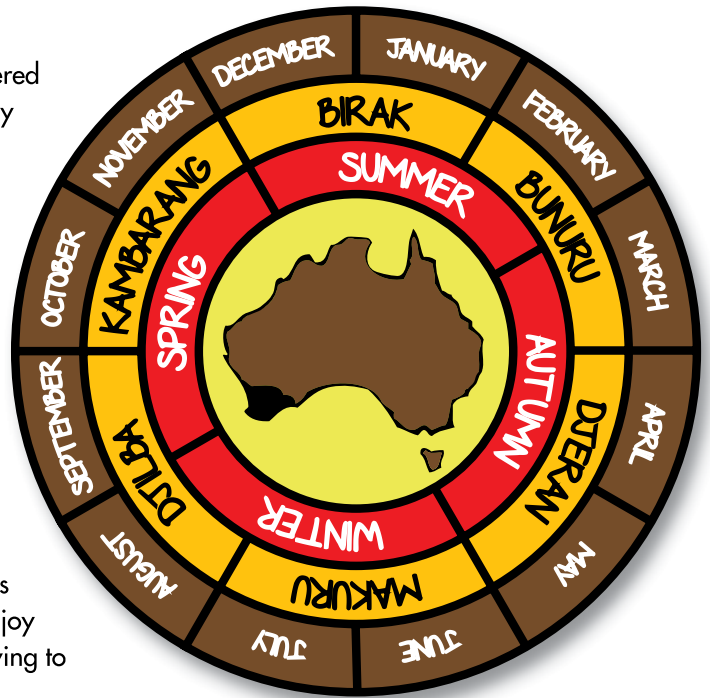
The Noongar people of south-western Australia had a very ordered way of life. Their hunting and gathering patterns were guided by six weather-based seasons.

Although Noongar men were the main suppliers of meat such as yonga (kangaroo), possum and bettongs (woylie), the women were responsible for maintaining the good nutrition of the community. They provided up to 90 per cent of the food, by collecting roots, tubers, corms, bulbs and fruits.

## Word of caution:

Please be aware that some plants are poisonous and require extensive treatment to make them edible. Tasting, therefore, should be carried out only under expert guidance. All native plants are protected by law and sampling some traditional foods would also result in the destruction of the plant. Therefore, enjoy reading and learning about the plants, but please refrain from trying to eat them.

***For more information see the Bush Tucker Plants of the South West bush book produced by the Department of Parks and Wildlife.***



Noongar Seasons Wheel image kindly provided by the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare.

Various books are available from the Bibbulmun Track website including the Wildflowers of the Northern Bibbulmun Track & Jarrah Forests by Anne Ireland and Kim Macey, and a wide range of bush books produced by the Department of Parks and Wildlife.

Visit our shop online at [bibbulmuntrack.org.au](http://bibbulmuntrack.org.au)

## Thank you...

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Unless otherwise noted the photography is by Cliff and Sharron Burns.

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**NEWMONT.**  
BODDINGTON GOLD

