Heritage Trails in the Great Southern

1. Denmark Timber H.T.
2. Mokare H.T.
3. First Settlement H.T.
4. **South Coast H.T.**
5. Woodanilling Pioneer H.T.
6. Wilson Inlet H.T.
7. Frankland H.T.
8. Mt Barker H.T.
9. Katanning H.T.
10. Jerramungup H.T.

W.A. Heritage Trails Network

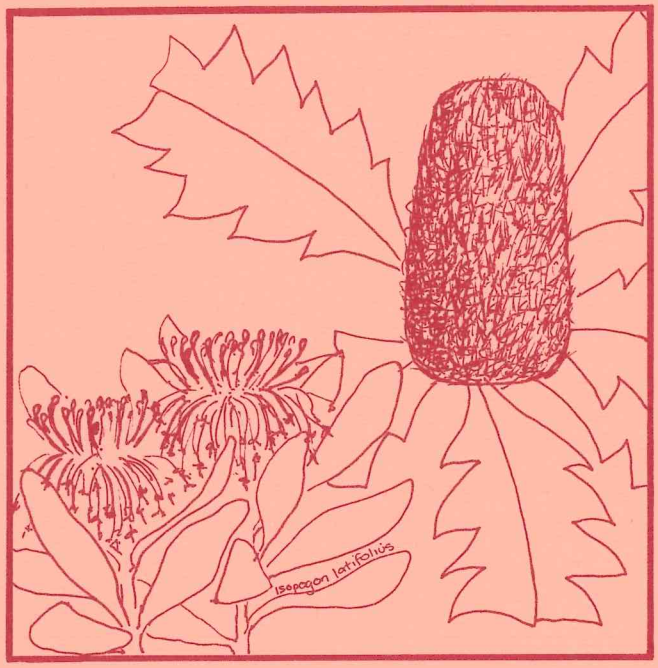
A Bicentennial Project for Community Participation

This Heritage Trail is part of the Heritage Trails Network, a project for community participation devised by the Western Australian Heritage Committee to commemorate the 1988 Bicentenary. The project established a statewide network of Heritage Trails - routes designed to enhance awareness and enjoyment of Western Australia's natural and cultural heritage.

The Heritage Trails Network was jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Western Australian governments under the Commonwealth/State Bicentennial Commemorative Program.

Stirling Range Heritage Trail

STIRLING RANGE NATIONAL PARK



SOUTH COAST NETWORK

Australia 1788-1988

A Commonwealth/State Bicentennial Project

Stirling Range Heritage Trail

"The Stirling Range burst on our view in great magnificence as we rounded the crest... The whole extend of the conical summits were spread before us".

So wrote Surveyor General John Septimus Roe in 1835 whilst approaching the range from the north west. Rugged hills rising abruptly from a flat plain, the Stirling Range has long invited closer inspection and fascinated visitors.

Stirling Range Heritage Trail follows closely the footsteps of James Drummond - a botanical collector and one of the first to explore the Range in 1843. The trail investigates early impressions and discoveries, and some of the flora for which the Stirling Range is famous.

This drive trail uses Stirling Range Drive. Use the illustrations and the map inside as your guide. The trail may be driven from either direction but we recommend travelling from west to east to make the most of the scenic views.

Several walk trails in the vicinity are listed later, providing further opportunities for discovery.

Walk Trails

MONDURUP PEAK ***4 km return. Moderate, 2 hours.***
Keep an eye out for ripple-surfaced rocks, evidence that the original sediments forming the sandstones were laid down in water.

MT MAGOG ***8 km return. Hard, 3-4 hours***
Please note there is no path for the final 1 km to the summit.

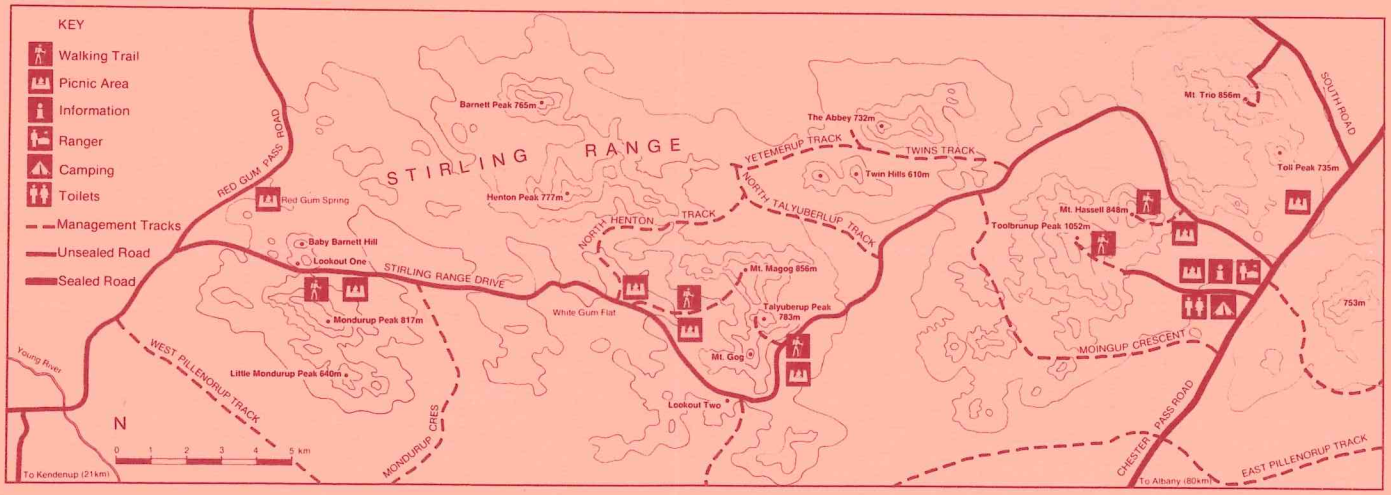
MT TALYUBERLUP ***3 km return. Moderate, 2 hours.***
Caverns and precipitous rocks at the summit of this mountain make this an exciting climb.

MT HASSELL ***4 km return. Moderate, 2-3 hours.***
At present this walk commences at the picnic area but is due to be relocated to the new car park soon.

MT TOOLBRUNUP ***4 km return. Hard, 3 hours.***
This walk is often regarded as the best in the Park. Excellent views from the summit, and dramatic rocky outcrops provide spectacular scenery.

Trails are steep and rough. Carry water and be prepared for weather changes.

Management tracks marked on the map provide alternative walk trails and opportunities for taking a closer look at the plants and birds for those who don't wish to climb.

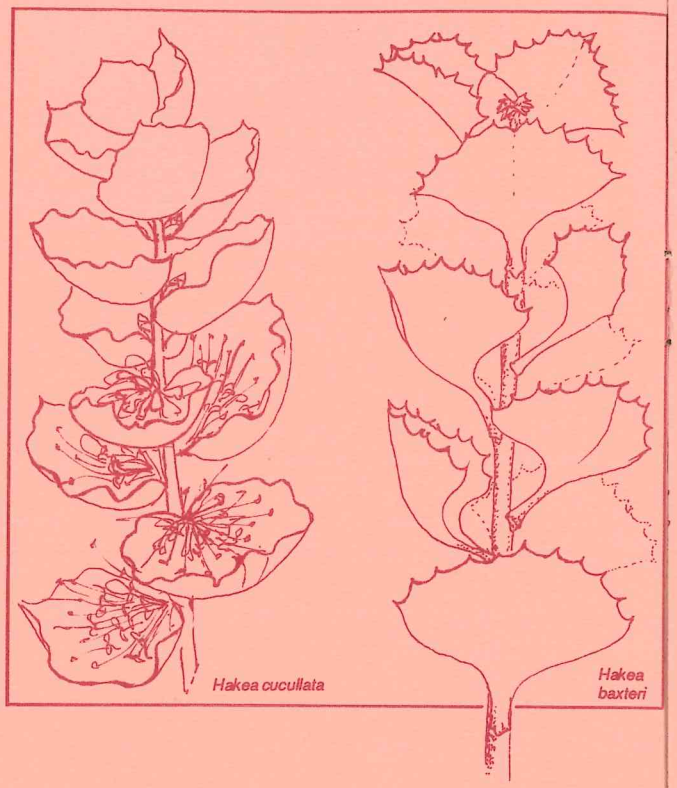


The Explorers

In 1832 Ensign Dale visited the range to ascertain its nature and find out of kuik and quannet (two types of "grain") grew in the vicinity. Dale scaled Mt Toolbrunup but failed to find the grains, which is hardly surprising as quannet, the seed of a large shrub *(Acacia sp.)* was described to him as a grass having a stalk 6-8 feet with seed the size of a pea.

Three years later Surveyor General Roe named the Range whilst exploring from Perth to Albany. He noted in his diary:
"The remarkable and picturesque mountains being as yet unknown collectively by any distinguishing appellation...I called them 'Stirling Range' after the Governor (of the Swan River Colony), by whom they were about to undergo a closer personal examination".

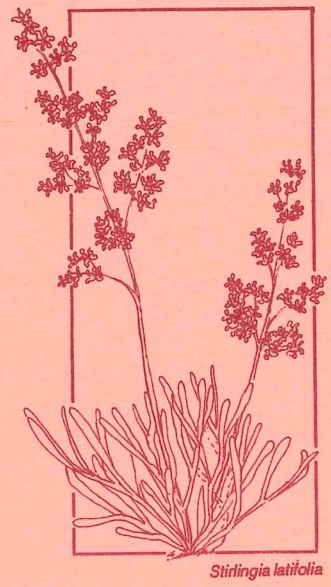
Surprisingly Roe and Stirling only scaled a small peak in the western part of the range before continuing south.



James Drummond, the colonial botanist, visited the Range in 1843 but it was not until 1846 that he explored extensively. Approaching from the west he scaled Mondurup Peak before proceeding via the base of Mt Talyuberlup to Mt Toolbrunup, and onto the Bluff Knoll massif. He visited the Range again in 1848. Drummond was the first to reveal many of the fascinating and unique plants for which Stirling Range is famous.

Over 1000 different plants have been found in the Stirling Range including 60 that are endemic to the range, that is, they are not found anywhere else in the world. This diversity largely reflects the many landscapes found within the Park, from mountain peaks to flat plains.

From the roadside you will be able to see some of the Stirling Range wildflowers, but you will discover much more by having a closer look, as many plants have hidden or small but fascinating flowers.

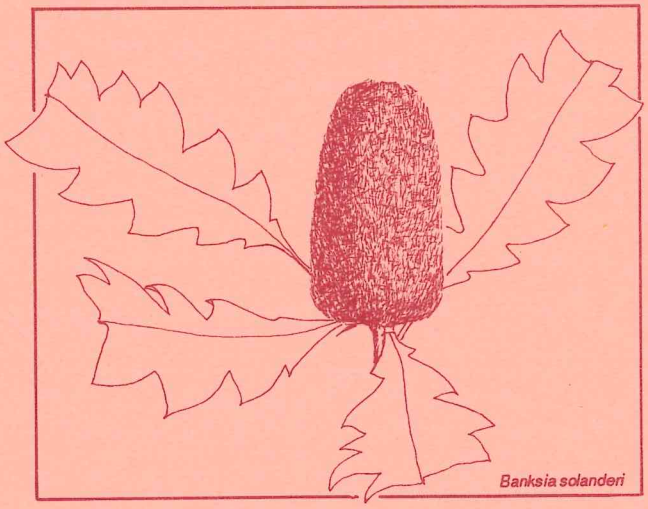

Stirlingia latifolia

Bells and Banksias

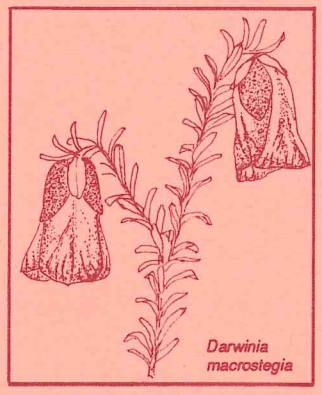
Blueboy *(Stirlingia latifolia)* is common on the road verges, flowering prolifically in spring, especially in a season after fire. The common name is derived from the fact that wall plaster made from sand where blueboy grows turns blue.

Excellent views of the Stirling Range are obtained from the lookout near Mondurup Peak. Here one overlooks the country Drummond first explored in 1846.

After camping near Red Gum Springs he scaled Mondurup Peak were he found Stirling Range banksia, *(Banksia solanderi)*, with its large leaves "irregularly jagged and serrated like an English Oak". Common on the higher peaks, good specimens of this banksia can be seen on the roadside 1 km west of Talyuberlup picnic area.



On Mondurup Peak Drummond also found Mondurup bell *(Darwinia macrostegia)* with flowers "enclosed in beautiful bracts, white, variegated with crimson veins...as elegantly formed in the finest tulip". Like Stirling Range banksia, Mondurup bell is only found in the Stirling Range. It can also be seen on the hill above the lookout.

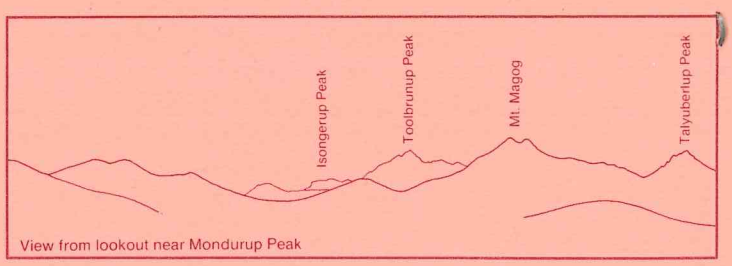

Darwinia macrostegia

If the plant is flowering, look inside the bracts to see the hidden flowers.

From the lookout the patterns of different plant associations in the valley stand out clearly, though the changes are more obvious as you travel along the valley.

Drummond, an astute observer, noted after a visit to the Ranges, *"it is well known that plants vary according to latitude and longitude, but the differences caused by all these in extent of a few hundred miles is not one tenth as great as that caused by the different nature of the soil"*

Along the creek beds wandoo or white gum *(Eucalyptus wandoo)* predominates. These trees are easily distinguished by their white bark and can be seen at White Gum Flat, Magog and Talyuberlup picnic areas. Characteristic of heavier soils, early explorers used this plant as an indicator of good grazing land and many of the early settlements in the central south west were established in stands of Wandoo.

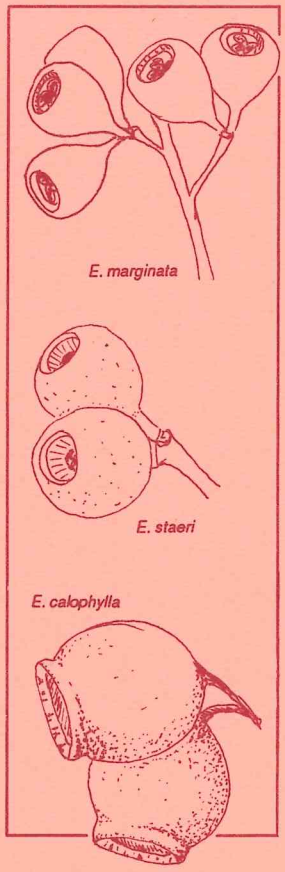


View from lookout near Mondurup Peak

What tree is it?

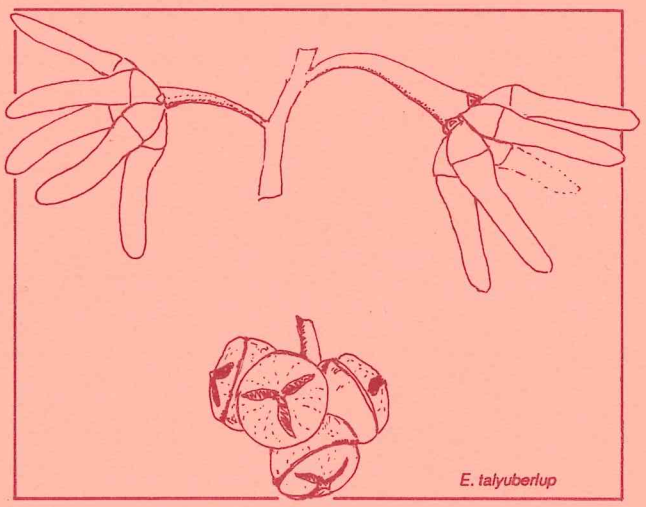
Jarrah *(E. marginata)* and Albany blackbutt *(E. staeri)* are common on the stony soils of the hills, whilst marri *(E. calophylla)* is found on intermediate soils. Jarrah and Albany blackbutt are the most common trees along the drive: their stunted appearance is a result of frequent firing. Jarrah is distinguished by its smaller fruit and leaves which have dissimilar coloured surfaces.

One eucalypt which has a very restricted distribution is *E. talyuberlup* with its fingerlike buds. Known from only a few localities this tree can be seen at the beginning of the Mt Talyuberlup walk.


E. marginata

E. staeri

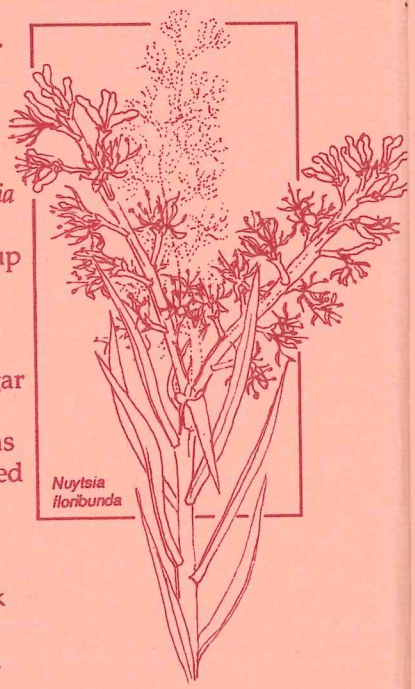
E. calophylla


E. talyuberlup

Native food

One of Dale's objectives as he approached the range in 1832 was to find two Aboriginal foods - kuik and quannet. He found neither, but a variety of food plants are found in the Stirling Range valleys and can be seen from this trail.

Slender Banksia *(B. attenuata)* was highly prized by Aborigines for the large amounts of nectar found in the flower. If it's flowering have a taste. It is a common tree in the valleys between Mondurup Peak and White Gum Flat, as is Christmas tree *(Nuytsia floribunda)*. Ethel Hassell of Jerramungup noted Aborigines ate the inner part of Christmas tree roots which tasted like "sugar candy". When flowering at Christmas time this tree is covered in masses of brilliant orange flowers. At other times it is distinguished by dark trunks of odd proportions and dark green leaves.



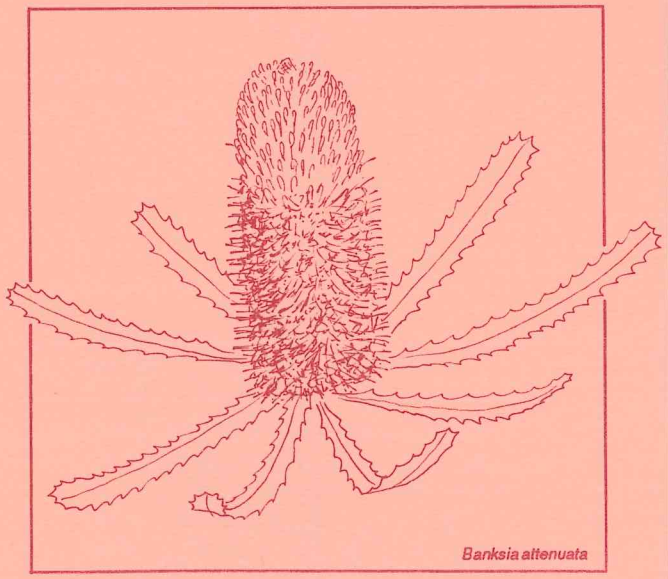
In his extensive travels, James Drummond noted Aborigines soaked flowers of marri *(Eucalyptus calophylla)* in water to form a sweet beverage, and he recorded the use of roots of wandoo which had a sweetish taste.

Dieback

Visitors today are not greeted with the same floral wealth as Drummond was in 1846 and 1848. In the valley between Mondurup Peak and Mt Talyuberlup Scarlet banksia *(B. coccinea)* was once common. Its absence today and the many dead slender banksia here are indicators that a dieback fungus is rife in the Stirling Range.

This disease is caused by an introduced microscopic fungus, *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, and is a major threat to our wildflower heritage today. This fungus kills plants by invading and rotting roots - thereby inhibiting water intake. Whilst not all plants are susceptible, many of our more spectacular plants like banksia are.

Proliferation of this disease in recent years has been due to movement of soil. Microscopic spores can travel hundreds of kilometres on car tyres, car bodies and even shoe soles. HELP STOP THE ROT - keep to formed roads, keep out of closed areas, clean vehicles before entering parks and reserves and after leaving infected areas such as Stirling Range National Park. Bushwalkers can help by cleaning shoes before entering parks and reserves.



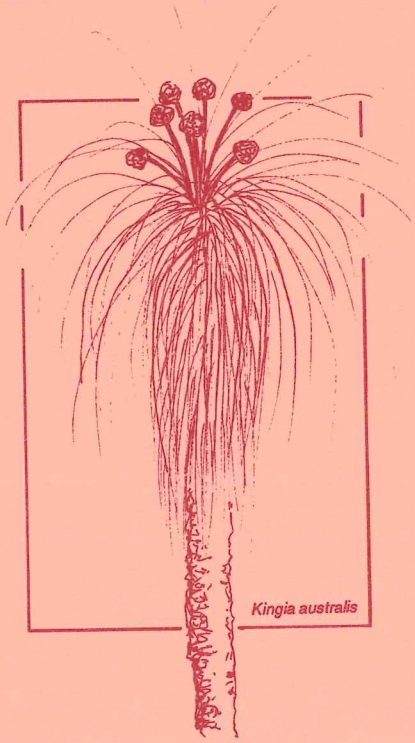
Fire

When James Drummond climbed Mt Toolbrunup for the second time in 1848 he noted it had been "burned over last year by the natives". He also noted: *"some of our plants never flower in perfection but the season after the ground is burned over. Among these is the Nuytsia (Christmas tree) which appears after a good fire a blackened trunk without a leaf but the next year it is nothing but one mass of orange flowers."*

Another plant stimulated to flower prolifically by fire is black gin, *Kingia australis*. Common along the trail this plant is distinguished from blackboy *(Xanthorrhoea platyphylla)* by its silver green leaves and drumstick-like flower heads.

Firing the country was a deliberate and integral part of Aboriginal land management designed to promote new growth and flush game.

If you pass a recently burnt area, stop and have a look. Many plants regenerate rapidly from rootstocks and hidden buds and many orchids flower following fire.



Further reading

W.E. Blackall & B.J. Grieve. How to Identify Western Australian Plants, UWA.

R. Erickson. Drummonds of Hawthorden 1975, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands.

R. Erickson et al. Flowers and Plants of Western Australia. Reed, 1979.

Remember

Be careful: Your enjoyment and safety in natural environments is our concern but your responsibility.

Be clean: Put your litter in bins, or better still take it with you.

Stay cool: Don't light fires.

Protect animals and plants: No firearms or pets please.

Be aware: Persons using this Heritage Trail do so at their own risk.

For further information

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ESPERANCE
(090) 71 3733

W.A. Heritage Trails Committee (09) 322 4375

Department of Conservation and Land Management
P.O. Box 104, COMO WA 6152
Phone: (09)367 0333

We hope you have enjoyed this Heritage Trail. Keep this pamphlet if you wish, but if you have no further use for it please return it to the box for other visitors to use.