

# WILDFLOWER

DISCOVERY

*A Guide  
for the Motorist*



Western Australia. Discover it for yourself 



*Kangaroo Paw and Verticordia*

### *Definition of Seasons*

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Early Spring – August to September  
Spring – September to October  
Late Spring – November to December  
Summer – December to February

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# WILDFLOWER DISCOVERY

## *A Guide for the Motorist*

Wildflowers grow under the best conditions for them, in their own good time. That's just how you should see them: under the best conditions for you, and in your own good time. So driving yourself is a good way to go about it. . . You can choose your own pace, stop and start whenever you like. This brochure has been put together as an easy guide to some of the best wildflower trails in this State, aimed at the self-driven wildflower enthusiast.

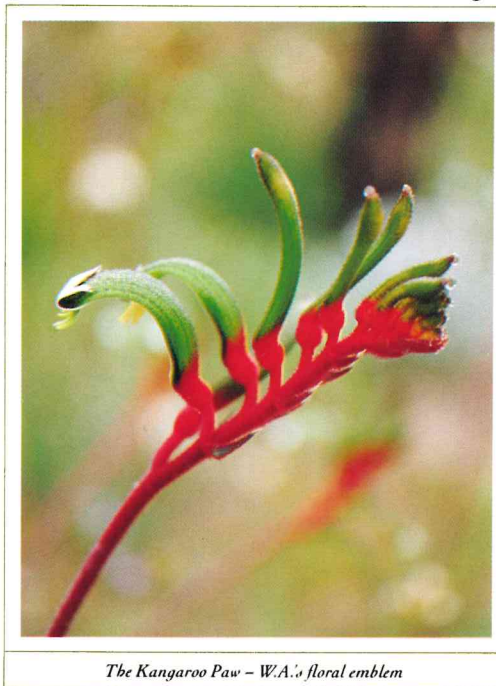
Each of the areas covered in this brochure contains its own unique combination of wildflower species which is determined by the environmental elements at work. These include the soil type, the local fauna, the larger plant system, the geological structure and most importantly – the weather.

Most Western Australian wildflowers bloom in Early Spring – from August through September. Some species, however, require a little more warmth for germination and therefore don't bloom until Late Spring – around October and November. This means that the wildflower season, beginning in the North West Trail in August, will appear slightly later as we head south, culminating in November in the more southern regions.

This is of course subject to seasonal weather variations but generally during August to November wildflowers can be seen in profusion in Western Australia.

This also coincides with an average daily temperature of 20 degrees celsius, which is ideal for driving and exploring the varying areas of Western Australia.

The following pages endeavour to supply you with enough detail to enjoy a wildflower trail on your own without botanists or guides, but the following publications may add to your experience. For more comprehensive tourist information about the area in which you will be travelling, pick up *The Unique North*, *The Heartland* or *The Southern Wonders* brochures. Whilst exploring you will also need accommodation guides – a useful guide to northern areas is the *Drive North* brochure. For those who prefer to enjoy the rural lifestyle, try the *Farm & Station Holiday Experience*. *Pubstay Holidays* provides a guide to friendly “pub” style accommodation, while *Country & Coastal Hideaways* concentrates on self-catering and bed & breakfast properties. *Holiday Parks* contains information about on-site caravan facilities. All of these guides are available from Western Australian Tourist Centres.



*The Kangaroo Paw – W.A.'s floral emblem*

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A wonderful book, full of information and beautiful photography is “Flowers and Plants of Western Australia”, authored by Rica Erickson, A.S. George, N.J. Marchant, and M.K. Morcombe, is available at most good book stores.

Our maps in this brochure are a handy guide but cannot replace having your own motoring organisation road maps for accurate directions and distances. These and similar maps are available at most service stations, motoring organisations, or Western Australian Tourist Centres in your capital city – and if there are a few trails which take your fancy and you can't travel them all this year, then tour one this year and make your wildflower expedition an annual event.



## The Jarrabland Trail

(Inset: Pink Pimelia)



Banjine



Donkey Orchids

This first wildflower trail begins on the South Western Highway. You drive through the hills of Serpentine National Park **1** (signposted as "Serpentine Falls"), famous for its waterfalls. Situated on the Darling Scarp, the park is extremely hilly, with steep gullies, rocky outcrops and granite scree slopes. Through the middle of the park the Serpentine River flows. Along its path, a sheer granite rockface forms a 15 metre drop for a spectacular waterfall. Jarrah and wandoo trees shield the undergrowth and many native animals can be seen – kangaroos, wallabies, possums, bandicoots, plus golden whistlers, splendid wrens, warblers and thornbirds. You have a choice of three well-planned walk trails: four kilometres, six kilometres or 20 kilometres, with maps and helpful advice available from the Park Ranger's office on site.



Holly-leaved Flamepea

Situated north of Dwellingup just off Scarp Road, Oakley Dam **2** was built in 1939 as a water stop for steam locomotives. Today there is a walk trail for you to leisurely see the forest, waterfall, superb wildflowers and panoramic views of the coastal plains. In winter and early spring you will see *Blue Squill*, *Tiny Star* and *White Bunny Orchids*. Delicate maidenhair ferns run alongside the creek. In spring there are magnificent displays of *Golden Dryandras* and *Sea-Urchin Hakeas*. In early summer you will

see a superb colour display on the granite rocks of yellow and pink *Verticordias*, red *Bottlebrush*, white *Beard-beaths* and orange *Lemon-scented Darwinia*. The birds are very tame, with western spinebills, splendid wrens, blue wrens, red-capped robins and numerous others.

Further inland, the Mumballyup Road **3** at Collie is a narrow but very attractive drive through a jarrah forest with masses of yellow wattle, trailing rafts of *Coral Vine*, nodding *White Pimelias*, *Blue Leschenaultia* and mauve *Pepper-and-Salt*. Under marri trees the sky-blue *Blue-Eyed Reed* blooms in spring.

Just 11 kilometres south of Pemberton, on the Old Vasse Highway, the Warren National Park **4** contains magnificent areas of virgin karri forest. The Heartbreak and Maidenbush Trails wind their way through the forest giving excellent views of the Warren River.

In tall timber country 17 kilometres west of Pemberton along the Vasse Highway, stands Beedelup National Park **5**. Walk over a footbridge built from a giant karri log as you marvel at Western Australia's most beautiful waterfalls. There are many natural lookout points in the area to enjoy the panoramic views.



Distances indicated between stars.



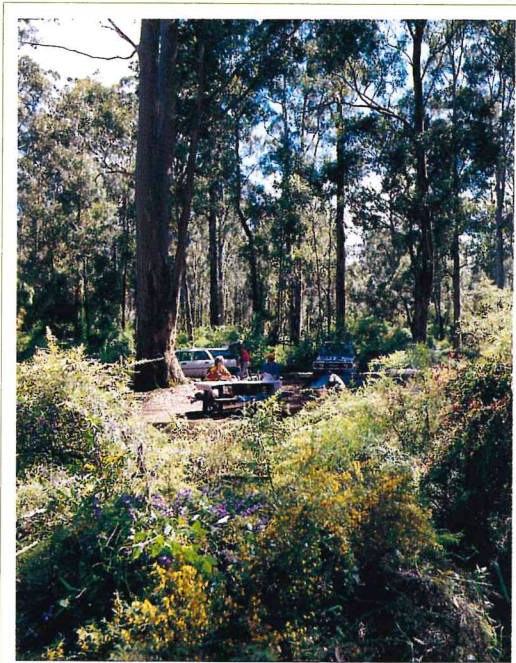
King Spider Orchid



Coastal heathland, Leeuwin - Naturaliste National Park

For the adventurous, Scott National Park **6** offers fascinating floral displays. Superb plants such as the *Climbing Trigger Plant* can be seen at swamp's edge, while in January/February the swamps are a pool of scarlet as the *Swamp Bottlebrush* bursts into bloom. This park has no roads within its boundaries and is accessible only by road from the Brockman Highway (signposted to the south approximately five kilometres after the Blackwood River Bridge) or by boat via the Blackwood River. This is also one of the most diverse assemblages in the world for the *Cord-Rushes*, a Southern Hemisphere plant family.

Caves Road **7** is a beautiful route off the highway to enjoy the majestic karri trees, the wildflowers and the numerous caves of the area. Take a detour along Boranup Road and experience the karri forest. Around September keep a look out for deep blue *Karri Hovea*, festoons of *Old Man's Beard*, *Yellow Cone Bushes* and *Yellow Patersonia*. The caves are famous for their unique galleries, with helictites, stalagmites, stalagmites and bejewelled underground lakes.



Enjoying a picnic in a Karri forest

Starting opposite the turn-off to Canal Rocks, take a beautiful detour along Wildwood Road **8**. As its name implies, this is a lovely rural drive with marri trees arched high above the roadway. The trees are mainly marri, a spectacular sight when in bloom in January. These trees provide honey for birds and mammals like the honey-possum in summer months when few other blooms are about.

Nature's tricks seem endless when you see Canal Rocks **9** at Yallingup. Large rocks rise from the sea in a canal system, with a man-made bridge over the smallest canal so you can walk across this unique edifice. Excellent fishing abounds here, with salmon a big attraction at Easter time.

Thirteen kilometres west of Dunsborough is Sugarloaf Rock **10**. This famous landmark is the only known nesting site in the south west of the red tailed tropic bird. The coastal heath grows on the limestone cliffs where it is sculptured by strong salt-laden winds. *Pink Pimelia* is especially attractive in spring.

Six kilometres south of Dunsborough, a popular holiday town, is Meelup **11**. The drive to this safe, sandy beach must be one of the prettiest in Australia. Large trees arch overhead and dapple the road as it winds its way coastwards. Here you can swim, barbecue or wander. Follow the creek a little way inland and you will find tall trees and dense undergrowth. In the cooler months maidenhair fern covers the ground and the only sounds you will hear are bird calls and the babble of the brook. Along the

road towards Eagle Bay shrubs replace trees and oddly shaped granite boulders are on display. As the shrubs are just shoulder high, it is an ideal place for birdwatching as the honeyeaters come to enjoy the flowers when they bloom in October.



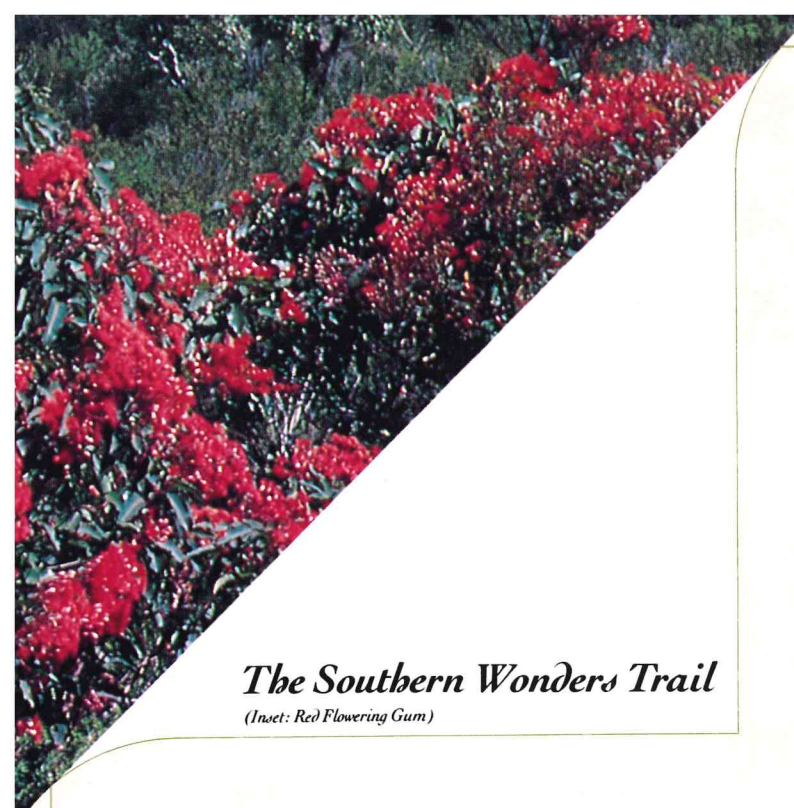
Hovea

Standing between Capel and the Sabina River by the Bussell Highway, the Ludlow Tuart Forest **12** is the only natural tuart forest in the world. These gigantic trees are 300 to 400 years old. The hushed sounds of this unique forest are punctuated by the many native birds that live high in its branches.

Australind has a unique history as a town planned by an early development company. Today Cathedral Avenue **13** is a beautiful drive through paperbark trees, a living reminder of past ambitions. Shore vegetation in the area is also interesting.

On the coast lies Yalgorup National Park **14**: 11,545 hectares between Mandurah and Bunbury. This narrow strip includes Lake Clifton, Lake Preston and seven minor lakes which harbour a large variety of bird life. The vegetation is varied, with coastal heaths, tuart woodlands, paperbark swamps, eucalypt woodlands and sedge swamps. There is access to sandy beaches at Tims Thicket Road, Hill Road and Preston Beach Road. The fauna in the area includes dotterels, black swans, bush wallabies and emus, sacred kingfishers, whistling kite and hoary-headed grebe. Walking is a delight along the lake edges and the fire-breaks.

Take your time now and return to Perth through the coastal holiday town of Mandurah, famous for its blue-manna crabs, and the historical port city of Fremantle.



## The Southern Wonders Trail

(Inset: Red Flowering Gum)



Pink Enamel Orchid



Scarlet Banksia

Approximately 40 kilometres from Perth on Albany Highway is Sullivan Rock **1** and nearby Mt Cooke. Here you can picnic in the shade of jarrah and marri trees, then set off on the Sullivan Rock Walk Trail, a comfortable hour's walk, across a granite outcrop, through changing bushland with sweeping views. Rock pools play host to *Sundews* and *Blue Fairy Orchids*. At the base of the rock look for pale mauve *Granite Honeymyrtle*, masses of tiny cream *Trymalium* and the startling colour combinations of mauve *Calytrix* and blue petals of *Andersonia*.

Further down Albany Highway, about 150 kilometres, you will find Woodanilling West Road **2**, called Robinson Road on your map. This is a reserve rich in vegetation like heath, salt creeks and york gum woodlands. In winter the heath is dotted with *Yellow Wattles*. In early summer you will see pink and yellow *Verticordias*, plus prostrate *Dryandras* with ground level flowers like *Honeypots*.

Back on the Highway, about 200 metres south of the Woodanilling turn off, is Monty's Pool **3** surrounded by woodland rich in moisture-loving plants. Under the wandoo, sheoak and flooded gums you will find mauve *Vanilla Lillies*, white *Milkmaids*, furry white *Tribonanthes* and many orchids, including *White Spider Orchids*, *Mignonette Orchids* and *Bee Orchids*. A very interesting plant here is the *Acacia lullfitzii* (*Lullfitz Wattle*) which forms a prickly yellow cushion in late spring.

Drive on to Cranbrook for the Cranbrook Townsite Nature Trail **4**. This bush walk just east of the town takes you through shrubland under wandoo trees. The area is rich in orchids, particularly in October. Look for *Pink Enamel Orchids*, *Rattlebeaks*, *Donkey Orchids* and *Blue Lady Orchids*.

One of the most fruitful places for a wildflower enthusiast to visit is the Stirling Range National Park **5**. A further 28 kilometres east of Cranbrook and 80 kilometres north of Albany, the Stirling Range rises abruptly to more than 1000M above sea-level, and, as the surrounding area is flat, the effect is nothing short of spectacular. The range was formed over 1300 million years ago when the area was a shallow sea. Climbing Toolbrunup Peak, look for ripple marks on the rocks – these were formed way back then by that shallow sea. Stark cliff faces, magnificent views and plant life which varies from tiny orchids and heathland to beautiful flowering gums are all part of the allure of the Stirlings.





Rose Coneflower



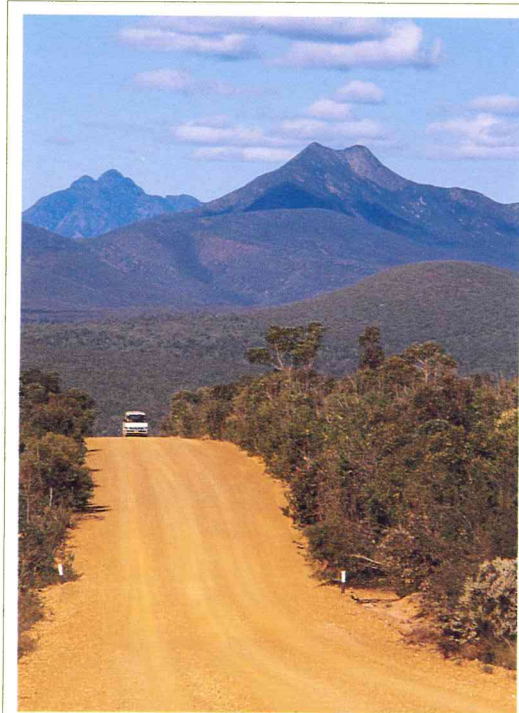
Christmas Tree



Shady Bell

Bluff Knoll, the highest peak in the Stirling Range, reaches 1073M above sea-level. Because of its height and its proximity to the South coast, the climate in the range differs from that of the surrounding district. As a result, over 1000 species of flowering plants occur naturally in the range and 60 of these are endemic. Among the most beautiful are the *Darwinias*, or 'Mountain Bells'. Ten species have so far been identified in the Park, only one of which is known to grow outside the Stirling Range. If you have limited time, then don't miss the Cascades Trail from Bluff Knoll carpark. In September/October the beautiful *Shady Bell* is easy to find in the dense woodland at the start of this and the Bluff Knoll Trail. *Pink Mountain Bell* occurs higher up the slopes along both trails. The wandoo woodland south of Stirling Range Caravan Park is a superb place for orchids in October.

Picnic facilities and lookouts are frequent along the Scenic Drive, with marked walk trails at most large mountain peaks, some trails lead all the way from the carpark to the top where you will see breathtaking views of a truly unique environment. With 115,671 hectares of the Stirling Range National Park to explore, a map and some briefing from the Park Rangers is a good idea.



Touring the Stirling Range National Park

Further south, about 30 kilometres east from Mt Barker and 40 kilometres north of Albany on the Chester Pass Road, rise the magnificent granite domes of the Porongorup Range within the Porongorup National Park <sup>6</sup>. Whilst no where near as tall or big as the Stirling Range, the Porongorups boast a singular beauty of their own. The range is covered in a luxuriant forest of giant, smooth barked karri trees and the forest understorey puts on a pretty display of wildflowers, with many white and yellow flowers, during spring and early summer, including beautiful *Karri Howea*. Brush wallabies, possums and native rodents mix with the western grey kangaroo, however it is the abundant birdlife that quickly attracts visitors. Walk trails take in the most unusual domes – Castle Rock, Devil's Slide, Many Peaks, the Sleeping Lady, etc.

Just 13 kilometres south from Albany is Torndirrup National Park <sup>7</sup>. In spring the heathlands put on a good display of wildflowers, while a woodland of peppermints occurs throughout the park, and south of Vancouver Peninsula karri forms a forest of medium height in combination with swamp yate. Banksias are numerous: at Salmon Holes, look for *Banksia praemorsa* with its unusual deep brown flowers.

Local wildlife habitats range from low heath and shrub on the infertile sand near the coast to low banksia forest and tall karri and jarrah-marri forest. The rare short-nosed bandicoot is seldom seen. More common is the western grey kangaroo. Walk trails in the park take you to well-known landmarks like the Blow-holes, the Natural Bridge and the Gap – some of the most spectacular landforms you will ever see. Fishing, swimming and boating are good along the inlet side, but because of the unpredictable nature of weather along the Southern Ocean shoreline caution is always necessary.

Down at West Cape Howe <sup>8</sup> the coastal heath is very rich, with *Banksias*, *Dryandras*, *Hakeas* and many plants from the *Myrtaceae* family. The area is a habitat for the insect-eating *Albany Pitcher*

*Plant* and many sea-coast bird species. A good gravel road leads to popular Shelley Beach but all other tracks are suitable for four wheel drive only. A four to five hour walk is mapped out in the Torbay area.

Approximately 15 kilometres west of Denmark is William Bay National Park <sup>9</sup>. The rugged coastal scenery in this area is dramatic and the vegetation is dominated by dense scrub of dryandra and W.A. peppermints. When ocean meets bush on the rocky coastline, look out for the large, white, five-petalled flower of the *Sticky Tail-flower*.

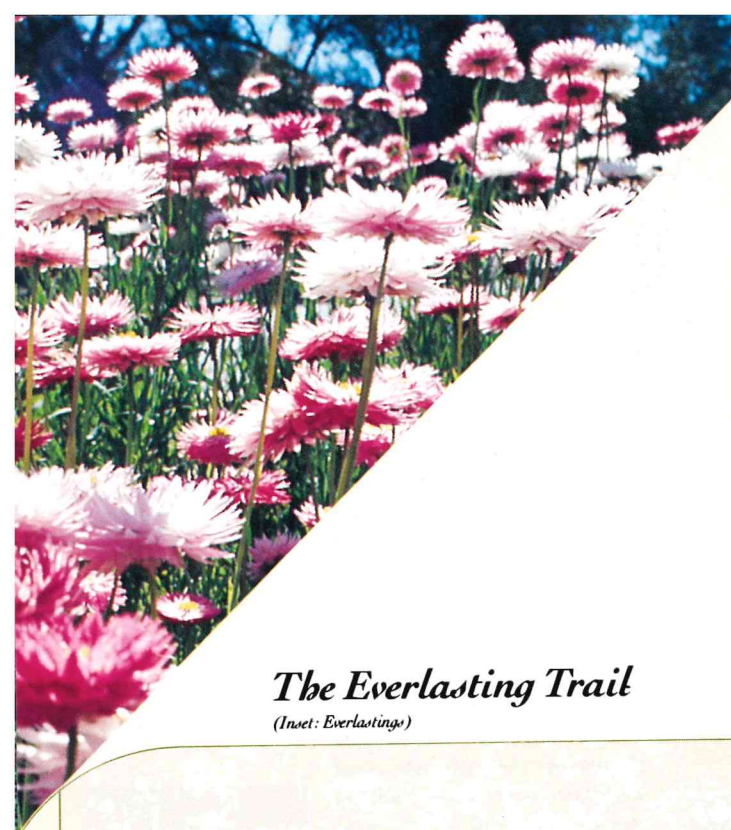
As you drive through Bow Bridge or Walpole in summer, ask if the trees are in bloom along Ficifolia Road <sup>10</sup>. The mass of pink and red flower-covered trees is very beautiful, but the drive is only worth it when they are in flower. So it is wise to ask first at the tourist bureau at Walpole.



Toolbrunup Bell



Painted Featherflower



## The Everlasting Trail

(Inset: Everlastings)



Billardiera



Cowslip Orchid

This wildflower trail follows the Brand Highway north from Perth out from the regional centre of Midland, stopping first at Gingin Cemetery <sup>1</sup> where beautiful *green* and *red Kangaroo Paws* put on a display amongst the old gravestones. It is an exotic start to a colourful trail. . .



Hairy Leucobea

About 40 kilometres up the highway you will find Red Gully Reserve <sup>2</sup> – the entrance is 1 kilometre south of Red Gully Road. Here you can gain a good vantage point to overlook Moore River National Park. Look for the attractive

open-branched *Dryandra kippistiana* amongst a wide selection of *Dryandras* on laterite caprock.

Your next stop is just minutes away: the Moore River National Park <sup>3</sup>. Besides a profusion of wildflowers found in the area, the Moore River woodland is dominated by *Christmas Morrison* in December. This unique shrub flowers in a brilliant golden bloom and provides visitors with a spectacular wildflower sight. *Slender* and *Firewood Banksias* are attractive all year round, so the park is worth a visit in any season.

Just 10 kilometres up the highway is Regan's Ford <sup>4</sup>. Have you ever seen *Cowslip Orchids* blooming in the spring? Beautiful. This is a delightful spot to picnic under flooded gums, then take a stroll through shrubland by the riverbanks.

Further north relax at Badgingarra National Park <sup>5</sup>, stretch your legs on a walktrail through delightful rich heathland. Extensive wildflowers put on a fascinating show in season, including the *Black Kangaroo Paw*.

Past Badgingarra you drive to Coomallo Creek <sup>6</sup>, one of WA's most beautiful wildflower stops. With over 200 wildflower varieties to enjoy, you'll need time to take it all in. *Black* and *Yellow Kangaroo Paws* are here, plus *Blue Smokebush*, *Painted* and *Scarlet Featherflowers*, *Scholtzias* and the area's own banksia variety *Coomallo Banksia* (*Banksia lanata*).

In Coorow Shire <sup>7</sup> drive out along Tootbardi Road to Alexander Morrison National Park and back along the Coorow-Green Head Road. There are fifteen different *Dryandras* here, amid the immensely rich heath.



Distances indicated between stars.





Christmas Tree



Carpet of Everlastings

Drive on to Eneabba <sup>8</sup> where you will find many varieties of *Banksias* including the unusual *Propellor Banksia*. In summer months the *Superb Starflower* makes a dramatic appearance with its big 3 cm magenta flowers. Look for Cockleshell Gully Road in the area for great views of Mt Leseur and superb heathland. You'll need four wheel drive for the best off-road viewpoints.

In almost a direct line to the coast is Lake Indoon <sup>9</sup>, a freshwater lake popular with water-skiers, yachtsmen and picnickers alike. This reserve gains its beauty from river gums and *Orange Banksias*, with *Plume* and *Umbrella Smokebushes* on either side of the road as you drive in. A special plant of the area is the *Elegant Banksia* with lime-yellow flowers.

Inland past Dongara towards Mingenew is Depot Hill National Park <sup>10</sup>. This park offers dense shrubland which is softened in spring by the pink and white flowers of *Thryptomenes* and *Scholtzias*. It is a very colourful stopover from August to November. If you are feeling energetic there are rugged hills to climb.

Signposted on the road between Mingenew and Mullewa, keep a sharp look out for Coalseam Reserve <sup>11</sup>, with cliffs rich in fossil shells. These shells are imbedded in rock bands dating back to the Permian Age when the area was a delta where huge forests rotted to coal on the floor, while periodically the sea flooded in and left marine deposits. Coal seams can still be seen in the riverbed and wildflowers of all descriptions are in abundance during the season. *Wattle* shrubland shades the *Pom-Pom Everlastings* and bright pink *Schoenia*. For geology, history and wildflowers, this is a "must" on your wildflower trail north.

While you are in the area, open your road map and find Erangy Springs Road, Depot Hill Road, Walkaway-Nangetty Road and Allanooka Road for

some magnificent wildflower drives. The shrubland is *Mallee* and *Banksia* and the wildflowers attract many varied and colourful nectar-loving birds. Look especially for *Red Pokers* – startlingly scarlet – *Prickly Plume Grevillea* and golden mops of tall *Wattles* in spring.

From <sup>12</sup> to <sup>17</sup> on the wildflower map shows the many small stopovers along "The Wildflower Way".

Besides being an exceptionally beautiful place for your pleasure, this corridor is very important for bird migration. *Wreath Leschenaultia* can be seen in many places but should be at the old Gutha Cemetery. Glorious *Native Foxgloves* and *Everlastings* grow en masse beneath the yellow *Wattles*.

It seems to be "all or nothing" as far as *Everlastings* go, but when the rains come the flowers follow in August, September and October. Such is surely the case inland from the Wildflower Way, where *Everlastings* <sup>18</sup> are in their element under the right conditions. Ask at local townships if the *Everlastings* are on view.

The Rabbit Proof Fence is a famous piece of Australian history you can see at Jibberding <sup>19</sup> on the Great Northern Highway. Attractive rock sheets are girdled by *Everlastings* and *Orchids* in a tranquil rural scene, making it an ideal picnic spot for "city slickers". Nearby you will see tennis courts and an old country cricket oval, reminders of community life as it once was. There is a good campsite at the site of the old hall.

On your way down the Great Northern Highway stop at Piawanning <sup>20</sup> to see superb heath on the undeveloped side of town. You will also enjoy *Bush Cauliflowers* and *Grevilleas* and the magnificent *Mottlecab*. A little way on is Victoria Plains <sup>21</sup> which boasts Old Plains Road, one of the loveliest and picturesque rural drives in Western Australia.



Roadside Grevilleas along the Brand Highway



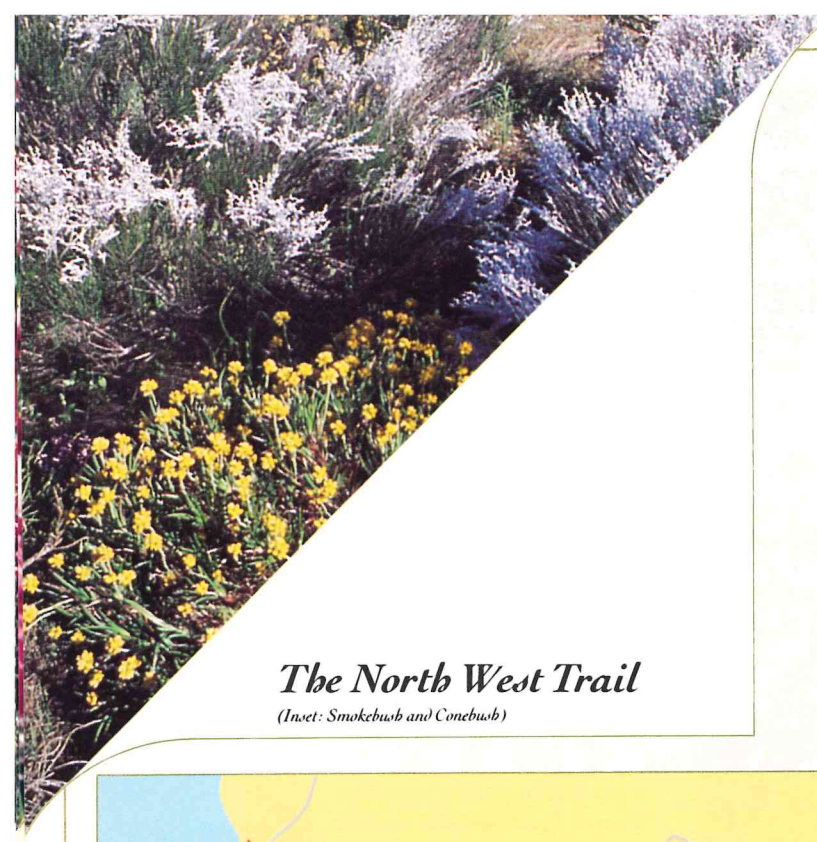
Wreath Leschenaultia



Scarlet Featherflower



Mallapora



## The North West Trail

(Inset: Smokebush and Conebush)



Southern Cross

It may sound a trifle bizarre but your first stop on this wildflower trail is Gingin Cemetery **1**. To get there, take the Brand Highway north, but detour through Gingin townsite – to the north of the town is the cemetery. In spring you will see a profusion of *Red* and *Green Kangaroo Paws* giving a magnificent display amongst the old gravestones.

Off the Brand Highway, still within Gingin Shire, is Moore River National Park **2**, a magnificent wildflower reserve. The area boasts a woodland of *Slender* and *Firewood Banksia* over mixed shrubs dominated by *Christmas Morrison* which forms a shoulder-high sheet of brilliant gold in December – a botanist has described it as “one of the world’s loveliest wildflower sights”.

Now continue up the Brand Highway past Badgingarra and you will find Coomallo Creek **3**, one of the State’s best wildflower spots. There are many unusual plants to see, with over 200 varieties on show including *Black Kangaroo Paws*, *Yellow Kangaroo Paws* and *Banksia lanata* (*Coomallo Banksia*). On the breakaway, look for a strange blue *Smokebush*, *Painted Featherflower*, *Scarlet Featherflower* and soft pink waves of *Scholtzias*. You will never exhaust the pleasure of this wide variety of wildflowers.



One-sided Bottlebrush

North of Coomallo stop at the Halfway Mill Roadhouse to pick up brochures for the two Coorow Shire wildflower drives **4** **5**. Look first at the Mt Leseur region, with the lovely *Leseur Southern Cross*, then go east to Coorow township.

Go north from Coorow up the Midlands Road to Carnamah **6** and pick up another wildflower tour brochure from the Shire which will take you back to Brand Highway through Tathra National Park, a superbly varied wildflower area.

Back towards the coast is Lake Indoon **7**, a freshwater lake popular for water-skiing, sailing or just having a picnic. This beautiful reserve features river gums and *Orange Banksias*. Lovely *Smokebushes* line the road, with the *Plume* and *Umbrella Smokebushes* predominating. Look for the very unusual *Elegant Banksia* with its lime-yellow flowers.



Distances indicated between stars.



*Diplopetalis eriocarpa*



*Wildflowers at the base of Mount Augustus*

Further up the North West Coastal Highway, north of Geraldton, is one of the State's favourite holiday destinations, Kalbarri. Situated at the mouth of the Murchison River **8**, the Kalbarri National Park covers 186,096 hectares, providing visitors with spectacular coastal cliffs and scenery. The Murchison River gorges are 50 to 70 metres deep in sand plains for 150 kilometres from the highway to Kalbarri town. The riverine vegetation displays magnificent wildflowers from July to September, with river gums, *Banksias*, *Grevilleas* and *Eucalypts* abundant. You may also see echidnas, feral goats and pigs, grey and red kangaroos and euros. Emus are also often seen, with over 170 other species of birds. Leave yourself time here to enjoy the area's many attractions.

When you can force yourself to leave Kalbarri, drive directly north to Carnarvon then turn right towards Gascoyne Junction. Your destination will be the Kennedy Ranges **9** where you can climb the cliffs (with due care!) to discover a pristine red sand dune wilderness on top. Entrance is via Gascoyne Junction and over the Gascoyne River. Opalite, mookaite, chalcidony, petrified wood, ironstone and fossils can be found, although you must travel around the

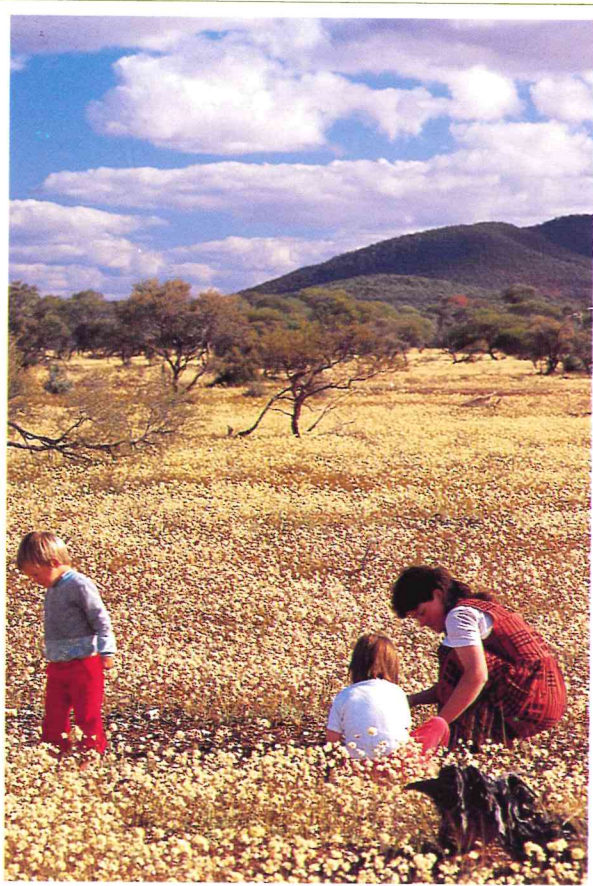
area to find them. Continue and branch east to Mt Augustus. There is a good campsite by the river. The climb to the top of Mt Augustus is arduous and should only be attempted by those who are fit. The area which surrounds the mountain is covered in spring and early summer by the delightful purple *Mulla Mullas*.

As you drive towards Perth down the Great Northern Highway, stop and relax at the Breakaway **10**

around four kilometres north of Cue. This area features shrubland with various *Wattles* and magenta *Parakeelya* whose juicy tubers were eaten by the Aboriginal people during dry summers. After good rains, in spring, the whole area is covered in a carpet of floral colour.

Down the Great Northern Highway south of New Norcia, from Old Plains Road to Bindoon Hill is the Bindoon Flora Road **11**, a delightful 'eyeful' for any wildflower enthusiast. The roadside is rich with unusual plants, like *Blue Leschenaultias*, *Buttercups*, blue *Smokebush* and a dozen different *Wattles*.

From here it is a comfortable drive to Perth to have your photos developed and to tell your friends just what they missed.



*Experiencing W.A.'s springtime wonderland*



*Black Kangaroo Paw*



## The Esperance Trail

(Inset: *Dampiera sacculata*)

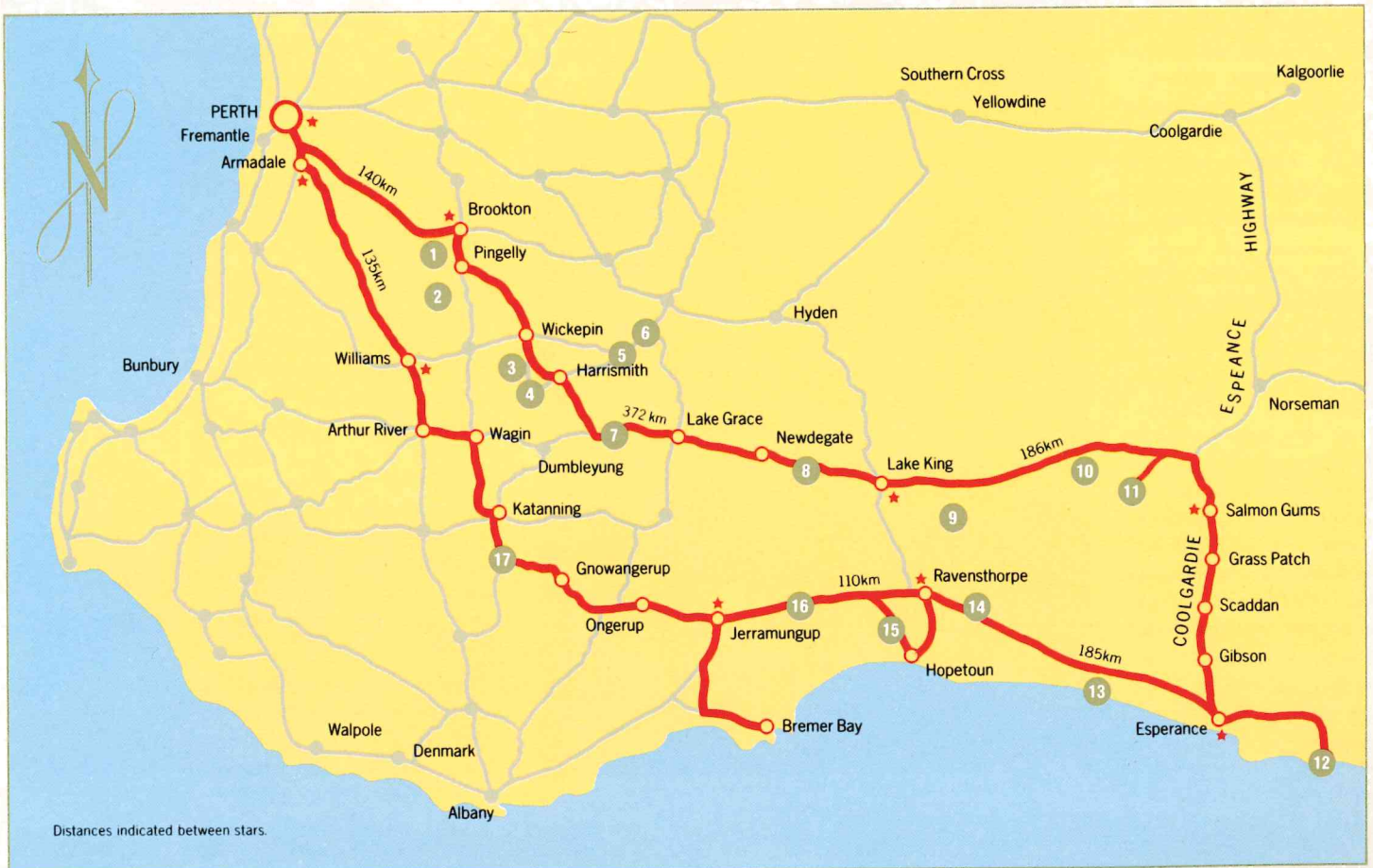


*Grevillea*



*Frankena setosa*

Your first stop on this wildflower trail is Boyagin Rock, ① 10 kilometres south of Brookton then 18 kilometres west. As well as driving north to the picnic site when you arrive, drive through the reserve and see superb powderbark woodland. In spring the trees have a powdery white bark which turns to a cinnamon shade by winter. The open shrubland beneath is home to many species of *Dryandras* and patches of Drummonds' gum can be seen. In early winter many small wattles are in bloom and the interesting *Pin Heath* with cream flowers on it like large nails.



The Numbat, W.A.'s fauna emblem



*Queen of Sheba Orchid*



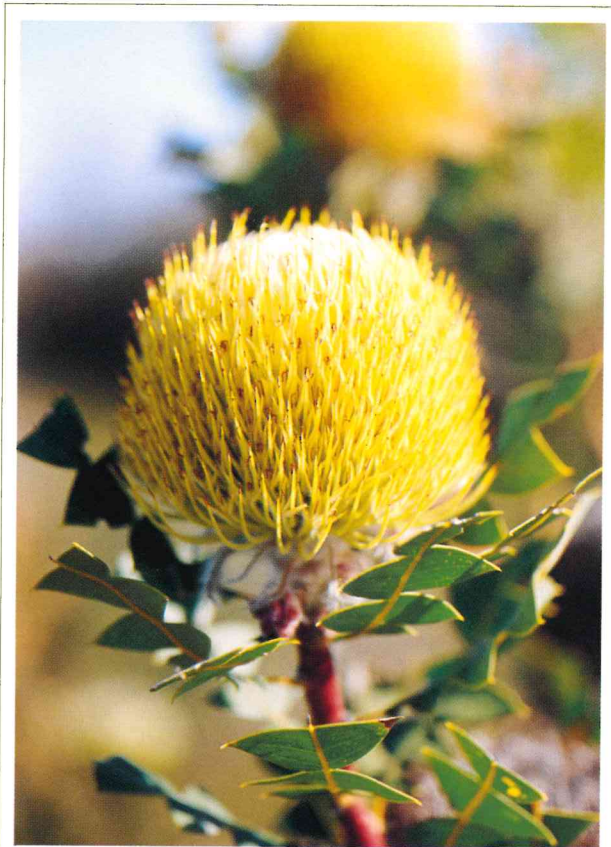
*Vanilla Orchid*



*Beaufortia*

The Dryandra Forest <sup>2</sup>, approximately 20 kilometres inland from Pingelly, has been described as "an ecological oasis". This large 22,000 hectare forest is a shelter for much wildlife and also produces timber. Back in the Depression of the 1930's parts of the reserve were hand-planted with brown mallet trees, used for many years by the Tannin bark industry. There are wandoo woodlands on clay flats, powderbark on gravel and mallee on the ridges. You will see *Golden Dryandras*, *Prickly Lambertia* and purple *Tangled Grevillea* on the gravel ridges and *Pink* and *Lemon Rainbows* and orchids such as *Sun Orchids*, *Vanilla Orchids* and the *Laughing Leak Orchid* in the damp clay areas. This forest is famous as home to the mallee fowl with their huge nests (one metre high and four metres across!), and one of the last surviving numbat colonies. Drive slowly along the tracks in the afternoon and you might see WA's fauna emblem running from place to place, digging out termites to eat.

Lake Toolibin <sup>3</sup> is a wetland refuge with paperbark and flooded gums. An important tree-planting programme is underway to attempt to halt the progress of salt into the lake. Around Toolibin <sup>4</sup> townsites are banksia and dryandra heathland, with many colourful plants out in spring. Tie-Line Road connects three townsites and is a reserve rich in wildflowers. Look out especially for *Possum Banksia* with soft furry lemon-coloured flowers and huge furry grey fruits. The Tincurrin townsites has good woodland with gimlet trees. And around Harrismith there are nine different *Dryandras*, *Fan-leaved Hakea*, *Round-fruited Banksia* and a host of other heath plants.



*Baxter's Banksia*

North Jitarning Nature Reserve <sup>5</sup> is a pleasant picnic spot, with *Prickly Honey-myrtle*, *Orange Eremaea*, *Little Bottlebrush* and *Nodding Cornflower* all at their best in spring. Look for small inconspicuous orchids beneath the shrubs.

In Kulin <sup>6</sup>, pick up a brochure at the Shire Council or service station to take with you to Hopkins Nature Reserve, Jilakin Rock and Buckley's Breakaway – all excellent wildflower sites.

At Kukerin <sup>7</sup> is Tarin Rock, with a very rich heath with many *Mallees*, *Grevilleas*, *Hakeas* and *Honeymyrtles*. One strange plant is the *Compass Bush* which always leans in the same direction. In October search for *Queen of Sheba Orchids* – a purple and gold flower which is one of WA's loveliest.

The Lake Grace area, including Newdegate and Lake King Road, <sup>8</sup> has superb wide road reserves especially reserved for wildflower conservation. In spring you will see *Flame Grevilleas*, *Red Toothbrushes* and the amazing black flowers of the *Black Toothbrush* and

*Prickly Toothbrush*. Black flowers again on *Curly Grevillea*, whose spindly stems grow high above the clump of grey-green leaves this plant often grows on the edge of old gravel pits.

If you are travelling four wheel drive, Emu Rock <sup>9</sup> is off the Lake King-Norseman Road after Lake King. Look for *Baxter's Kunzea* on the rock, then check out the old well, made by the workers on the Rabbit Proof Fence.



*Lemon Rainbow*



*Bottlebrushes*

On the Lake King-Norseman Road, old water tanks at the crossroads <sup>10</sup> identify an area where *Southern Plains Banksia* and *Swordfish Banksia* dominate a heath with many different understory plants. In spring, look for tiny *Beautiful Sundews* – orange flowers with black centres rising from a rosette of sticky, fly-catching leaves.

Leave the Lake King-Norseman Road (around 150 kilometres east of Lake King) to find the bush camp at Peak Charles National Park <sup>11</sup>. This ancient granite peak and its companion, Peak Eleanora, give sweeping views over the sandplain heaths and salt lake systems of the area. There is an attractive wooded camping site and the park has marvellous red granite rockfaces including some wavepatterns. Take time to search for the very unusual *Tuberous One-sided Bottlebrush*.

Cape Le Grand National Park <sup>12</sup>, 40 kilometres east of Esperance by sealed road, features attractive bays with wide sandy beaches set between rocky headlands. Inland the park protects an undulating heathcovered sandplain interspersed with swamps and freshwater pools. In the south-west corner of the park massive rock outcrops of granite and gneiss form an impressive chain of peaks. If you are very lucky you might see the pigmy honey possum and the bandicoot, plus the western grey kangaroo which is nearly tame, at Lucky Bay. There are lots of walks at Cape Le Grand, from 45 minutes easy pace to a stern 3 hours hard walk – but there is lots to see and all very floriferous!

Travel 80 kilometres west of Esperance to Stokes National Park <sup>13</sup>. This park encompasses Stokes Inlet and features long beaches and rocky headlands backed by sand dunes and low hills. The Inlet and its associated lakes support a rich variety of wildlife. Vegetation in the area is mainly coastal heath, scrub and areas of dense low forest.

Ravensthorpe Range <sup>14</sup> is noted for its rare flora, from eucalypts to orchids and is situated approximately 10 kilometres from the township. You will enjoy a shrubland dominated by *Mallees* and *Dryandras*, with colourful wattles, peas, brown-flowered *Davesias*, blue *Dampieras* and white *Ravensthorpe Peppermints*. Take to the trail on foot or horseback for panoramic views of hills, farms and towns. (Guides are available for a fee. Ask at the Ravensthorpe Tourist Bureau.)

Fitzgerald River National Park <sup>15</sup> is a place of remarkable contrasts. You drive from Ravensthorpe to Hopetoun and up Hamersley Drive. The park is one of WA's two biosphere reserves and is world-renowned for its wildflowers. The most spectacular flowers you will see (we can't list them all) include the *Royal Hakea*, the *Pincushion Hakea*, the *Four Winged Mallee* (*Eucalyptus tetraptera*), the *Scarlet Banksia*, the *Quaalup Bell* and the *Barrens Regelia*. There are walk trails on east and west Mt Barren and near Twertup Field Study Centre, complete with brochures and maps at start of trail. A heritage trail, with marked places of interest, follows Hamersley Drive. Contact the Ranger at East Mt Barren for more information.

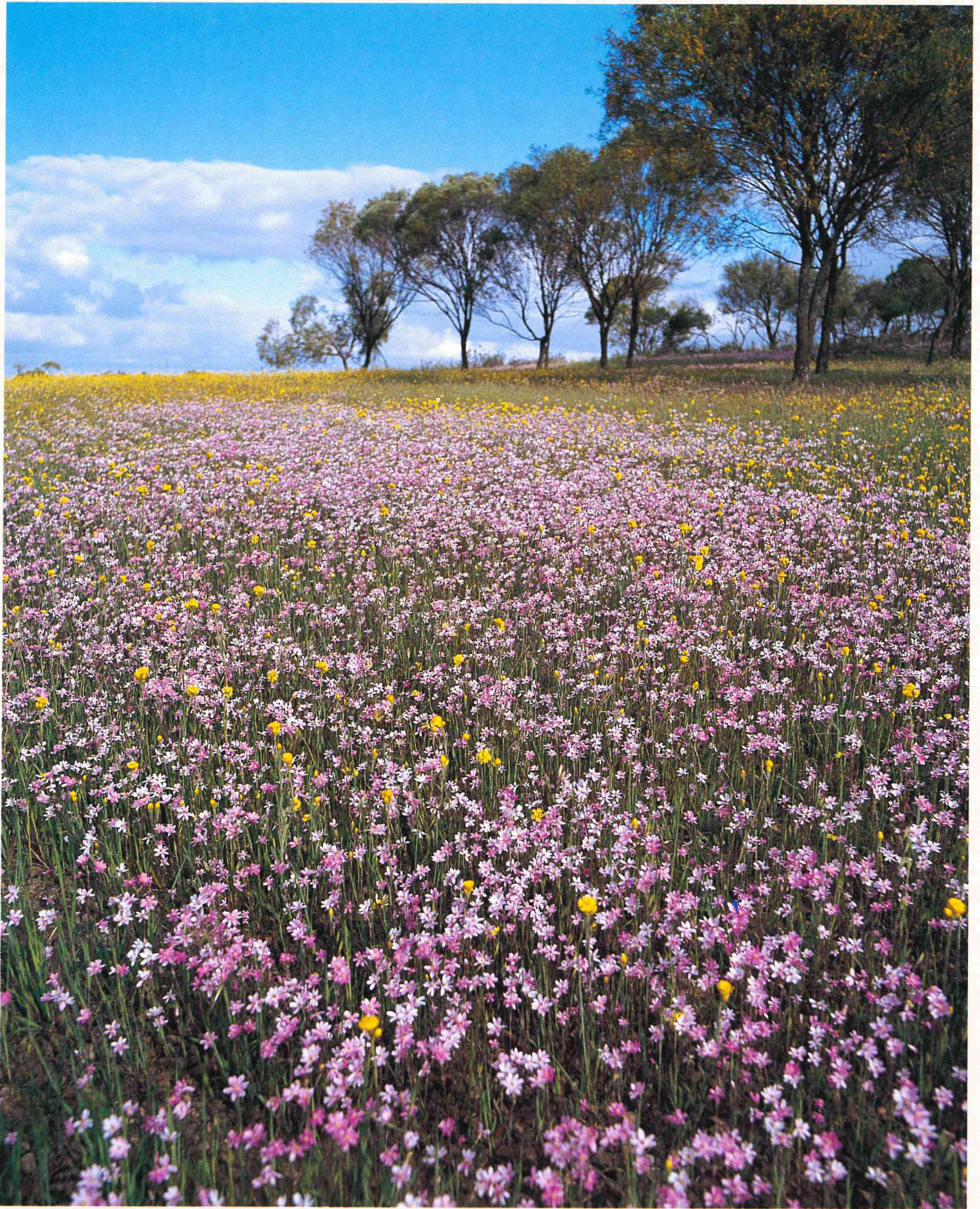
The Ravensthorpe/Jerramungup Road <sup>16</sup> is a wide road reserve with *Violet Banksia*, *Asbby Hakea* and *Bush Cauliflowers* among its numerous attractions. Take a leisurely pace and stop to see nature's work close-up.

Drive through Ongerup and Gnowangerup until you get to Broomehill <sup>17</sup>. Here you will see open heath under woodland, with *Curly Grass*, *Pincushions* and several types of *Poison Buses* with brown and yellow pea flowers.

From here it's a gentle five hour drive to Perth.



*Duke of Orleans Bay, Esperance – a typical coastal panorama*



*Western Australia - ablaze with wildflowers*

### ***Acknowledgements***

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*For further information and bookings  
please contact the local tourist bureau  
or information centre in each town  
or the*

*Western Australian Tourist Centres*

**Perth:** Forrest Place (Cnr. Wellington Street), Western Australia 6000  
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*or your local automobile association*