

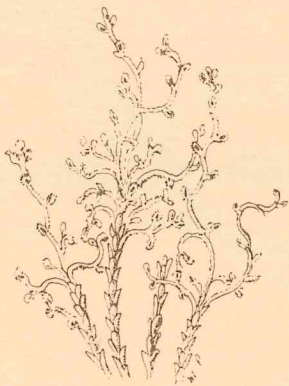
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Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

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underneath shady trees beside the dam, but investigate the track before crossing the railway, it may be in poor condition.

From this site there are very pleasant wildflower rambles. In winter, walk downstream beneath the Yate trees and you should find lots of orchids. Walk uphill for some splendid examples of mallee and mallet woodland while the road which parallels the railway back towards Kukerin passes through excellent kwongan. Look for the unusual Stiff Smokebush and Dwarf Blackboys.



Stiff Smokebush

6. Kwongan and Fire

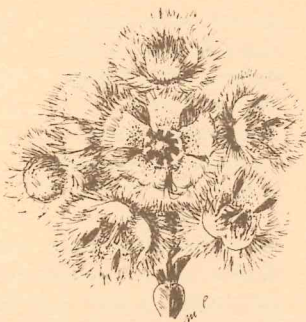
Bush fires, whether started by humans, or naturally by lightning, have been a part of the Australian environment for a very long time. Kwongan, especially, burns very fiercely, and appears completely devastated soon afterwards. But the plants shoot again from resistant rootstocks, or grow from seed, thus as long as the fires are not too frequent, the community will survive.

Following a fire, the bush regenerates in a set sequence. The first year will be excellent for orchids. Then short-lived perennials such as smokebush will take over, finally the more slow-growing shrubs come to dominate the area. The appearance of kwongan therefore depends very much on the time since the last fire.

7. The Switchbacks

The reserve on which the Rifle Range is situated has a dense cover of mallee and tall kwongan including many Featherflowers and the Pink Spike Hakea.

There are views of pleasant farming country from this road, but the real feature is the series of steep hills and valleys called The Switchbacks. Drive very carefully, or you might find yourself doing some low flying!



Oval Leaved Featherflowers

8. Change in the Vegetation Community

Along the roads around Candlelight and Moulyinning you will see how soil disturbance, changes in nutrient levels and rising salinity alters the roadside community, favouring the establishment of weeds.

One native plant which has benefited from this is Centipede Bush, a dense leafless low shrub with flattened stems which is often found growing in marginally saline areas. Look for its small yellow pea flowers in late spring.

Another plant which positively relishes the constant disturbance of the road edge is Pop Flower. The brilliant lemon-yellow clumps look vaguely unaustralian, but it is a native.

9. Towns in Decline

Candlelight is a township which was never developed, whereas Moulyinning is slowly declining in population. It has an interesting example of an early one-roomed schoolhouse.

The undeveloped portions of both townsites are covered by superb woodland dominated by Salmon Gums. Note, however, how introduced grasses are invading the ground layer.

TRAFFIC SAFETY

When stopping by the roadside, signal your intentions in plenty of time to alert the following traffic.

Do not park on crests or curves, or where traffic visibility is poor. If crossing a road, keep control of children and pets.

BEST TIMES FOR TRAVEL

The kwongan wildflowers are at their best from July to November, although there is something in flower all the year round.

REMEMBER THE COUNTRY CODE!

Take nothing but photographs
Leave nothing but footprints.

FACILITIES AVAILABLE

Kukerin: food, fuel, hotel, caravan park.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact:
Kukerin Post Office & Shop.

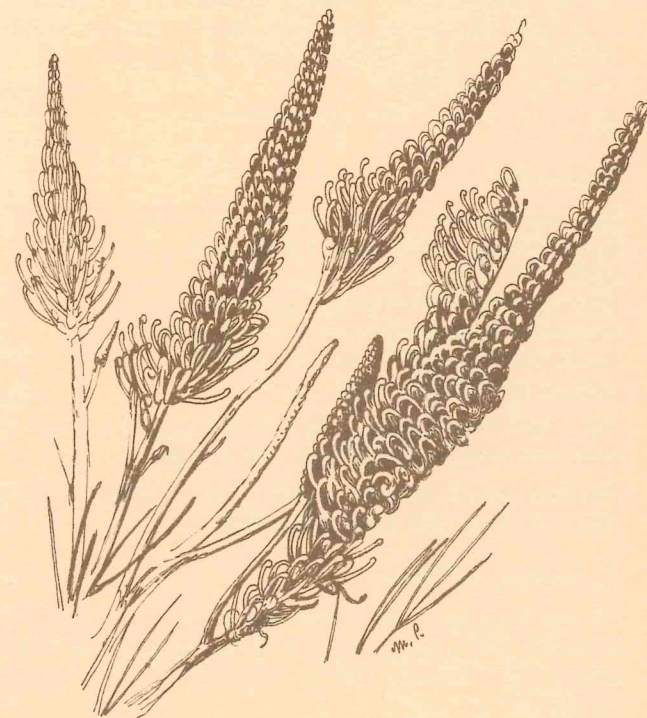


Produced by the Department of Conservation and Land Management consultation with the Kukerin Tourist Committee.

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Drawings by Margaret Pieroni.

Kukerin & Wheatbelt Wildflowers



Flame Grevillea

PAM01977

Roadside Conservation Committee



c/- P.O. Box 104 COMO W.A. 6152

Kukerin and Wheatbelt Wildflowers

Inland S-W Australia originally consisted of an intricate mosaic of woodland, mallee, heath (which aboriginals called kwongan) and salt flats.

Subtle gradations of rainfall and soil type led to a greater variety of plant life than is seen almost anywhere else in the world.

Early settlers quickly discovered the fertility of the woodland soils and much of this has been cleared to form productive farmland. Remnants remain, however, along roads and in townsites and nature reserves and, for anyone who takes the time to look, the wheatbelt can be a wildflower wonderland.

Start at KUKERIN - you're welcome!

Townsites

Between 1907 and 1916 the railway was built from Dumbleyung to Lake Grace, providing an impetus for settlement in the region. Townsites were laid out at frequent intervals along the line, but many of them have never been fully developed and remain as important examples of the vegetation which existed prior to agricultural clearing in the region.

The small, friendly town of KUKERIN is a great place to start your wheatbelt wildflower wanderings.

This brochure describes a couple of good wildflower drives. There are many others for you to discover!

1. Avenue of Trees

An occasional back road, unaffected as yet by the modern desire for high speed travel, still retains verges of tall trees which arch across the road to create a tunnel effect of great beauty.

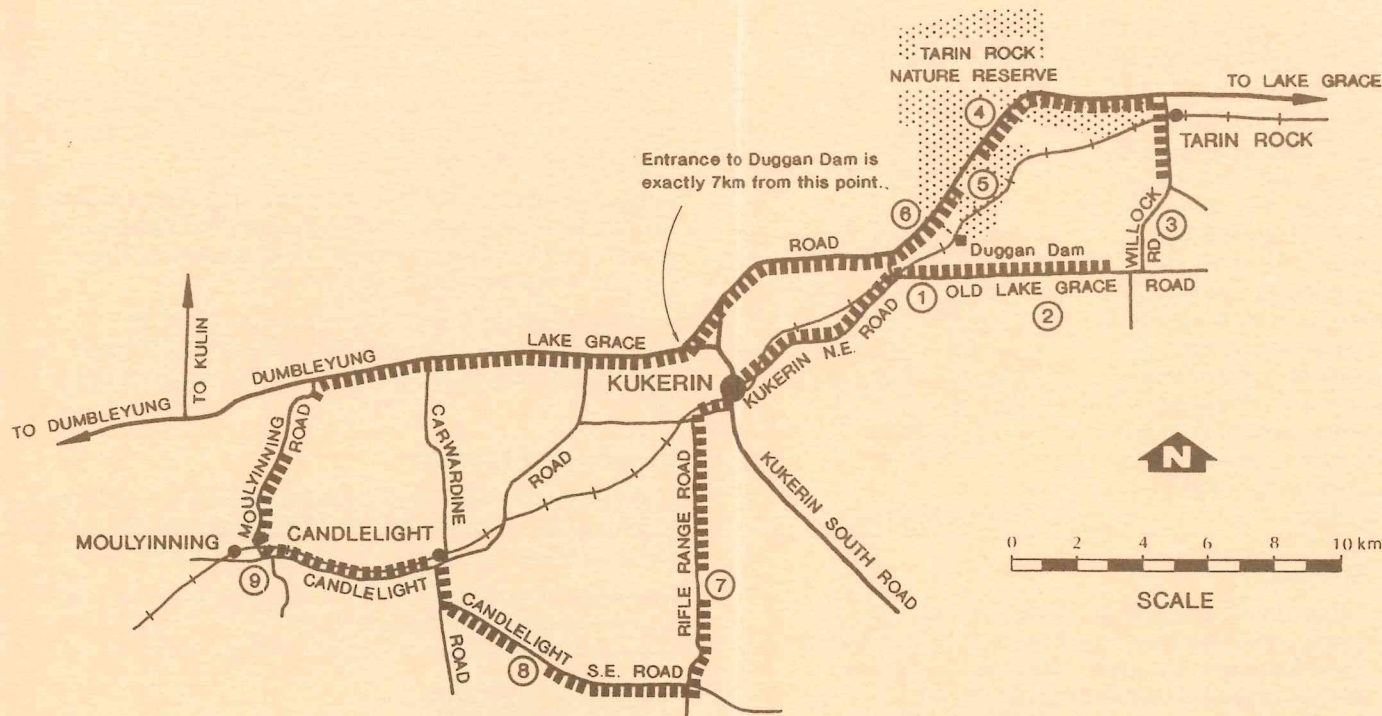
Near Duggan there are avenues of Salmon Gums, the wheatbelt's own special tree.

Photograph them in late afternoon in summer, when the angled rays of the sun raise an iridescent gleam from the deep salmon coloured bark.

2. Woolly Banksia

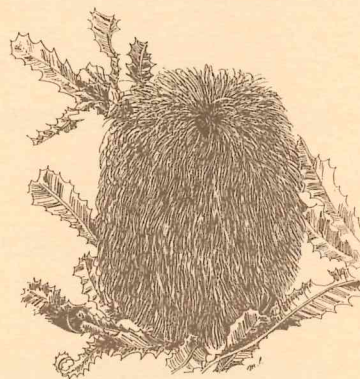
This part of the road traverses a gravelly ridge with good views over attractive farming country.

The roadside is very rich kwongan dominated by plants of the Banksia and Myrtle families. There are numerous Dryandras and Hakeas, including Baxter's Hakea, with huge woody fruits and broad fan-shaped leaves, together with



Sticky Conebush, Smokebush, various Featherflowers and many others.

One very special plant is Woolly Banksia. In early winter look in the centre of the bush for its enormous fat furry grey flower spikes.



Woolly Banksia

3. Mallet

These breakaway hills on private property are still covered with woodland, mainly of mallet. This tree used to be the basis of an important industry extracting tannin from its bark.

4. Tarin Rock Nature Reserve

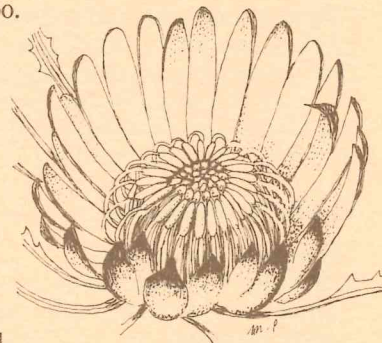
This 2,000 ha nature reserve has gravelly hilltops surrounded by gently sloping valleys of sandy loam. Most of the reserve is covered by kwongan, but there are also areas of woodland and mallee.

The vegetation here is extremely rich and varied, and supports numerous small animals and birds.

One notable plant is Compass Bush (a prickly Sheoak) which always leans in one direction, probably related to prevailing winds. Flame Grevillea, which flowers in spring, sometimes does this too.

Stop at either of the truck bays and walk into the bush, perhaps along firebreaks.

As well as the large and colourful shrubs, look for small things such as Sundews, Triggerplants and Orchids. The exquisite Queen of Sheba Orchid is not common, but it does occur here. Another unusual plant is Echidna Wattle, whose cushions become covered in golden-yellow pom-poms in early summer. The more you look, the more you'll see!



Dryandra

5. Duggan Water Reserve

A large bitumen catchment fills a dam built early this century, originally for the railway, but now used for stock water during drought. There is an attractive picnic site