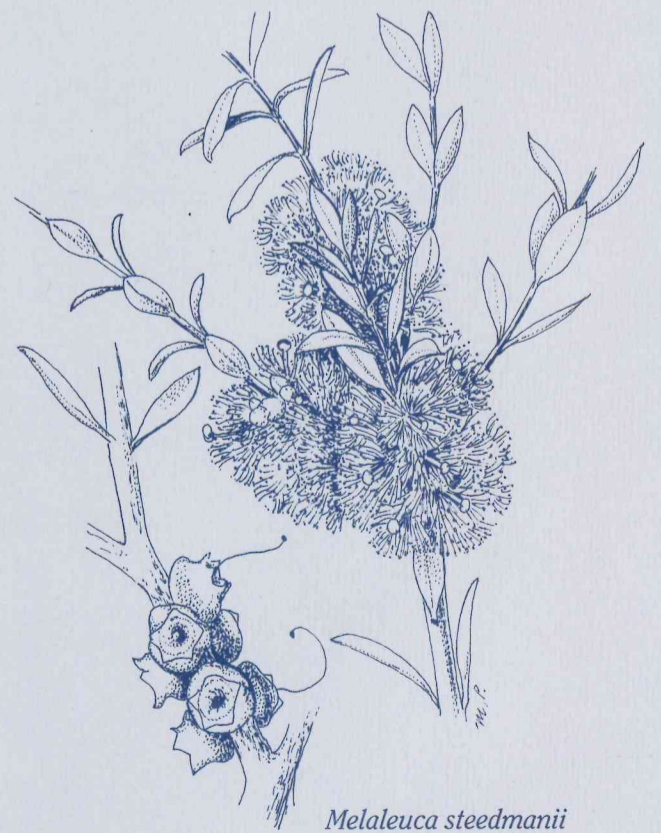


LIBRARY

Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions

This PDF has been created for digital preservation. It may be used for research but is not suitable for other purposes. It may be superseded by a more current version or just be out-of-date and have no relevance to current situations.

Coorow - Midwest Wildflowers



Melaleuca steedmanii
Scarlet Honeymyrtle

Coorow - Gateway to the

Midwest!

Coorow Shire covers the two major land forms in WA - to the east is the Yilgarn Shield while to the west is a very different landscape over the Dandaragan Plateau.

Two loop drives are outlined to show you the different landforms and wildflowers in the two areas.

Early history

William and Sarah Long were the first settlers in the region, arriving in 1862, but most Settlement took place after 1894, when the Midland Railway, linking Perth to Geraldton, was completed.

The land favoured for the first farms was the red loam soil, which has some natural fertility. Development of the "light land" commenced in the 1950s by which time the need for trace elements was appreciated, improved strains of Subterranean Clover were available, Blue Lupins had proved their usefulness and superphosphate was no longer scarce.

Coorow Wildflower Tour - East

Here the tour route crosses the very ancient rocks of the Yilgarn Shield, one of the oldest land masses on earth. Mostly granites, they have been weathered over thousands of millions of years into the almost flat Darling Plateau.

Some 20 million years ago Australia's climate was much wetter, and huge meandering rivers carried water from the inland to the sea. As the climate gradually dried up, the rivers changed to chains of salt lakes but the wide shallow valleys they carved still dominate the landscape.

On this tour you will see how the soil and the natural vegetation change in a very regular way

REMEMBER THE COUNTRY CODE!

Take nothing but photographs.

Leave nothing but footprints.

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

Most wildflowers are at their best from August in the east of the Shire, through to December in the west, although there is something in flower all year round.

FACILITIES AVAILABLE

COOROW: Food, fuel, hotel, caravan park.

MARCHAGEE: Fuel.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact:

Shire of Coorow (099) 52 1103.



Produced by the Department of Conservation and Land Management in consultation with the Shire of Coorow.



Waddi Well

This is in a small reserve where the granite comes to the surface. It is a pleasant picnic site, especially in Spring. Notice the rock carrying a plaque recording the site of a one-teacher school.

Salt Lake Chain

This ancient river is now reduced to a series of salt pans, and flows only after heavy rain. The plants have fascinating adaptations to cope with the high salinity, and it is well worth stopping to have a better look.

For example, during the rains Samphire stores fresh water in its fleshy stems which look like a string of beads, drawing on this supply during the long dry summers.

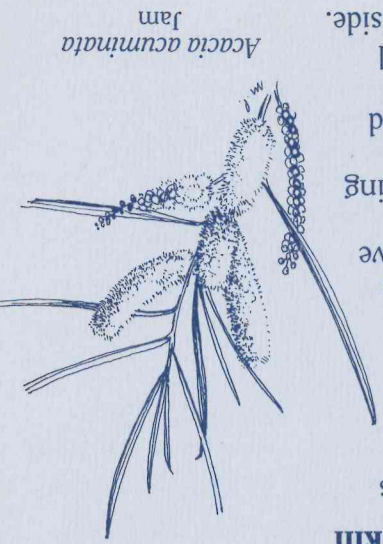
Between the salt areas are "islands" of higher ground with characteristic shrubby vegetation.

Coorow - Maya Road 4km

This road climbs away from the valley to the uplands.

Teasdale Road 23km

Drive with care - this road is sandy. It travels through land which has only been cleared for farming within the last 40 years. Originally the whole area would have been covered in a shrubby thicket varying in height with time since the last fire, and many of the very attractive shrubs still occur along the roadside.



Acacia acuminata
Jam

depending on the position in the

and slopes have

sandy or gravelly

soils with mallee

and scrub, while

the valley floors

have red or grey

clays and loams,

originally

supporting

magnificent

Salmon Gum and

Gimlet forest.

Notice how clearing

of the original

vegetation has led to the

spread of saline areas adjoining salt lake systems

and along drainage lines.

Coorow - Latham Road 26km

Like most roads in early - settled areas this is only one chain (20m) wide, leaving little space on the roadside for remnant vegetation.

Along the roadside are some fine examples of the original woodland trees, York Gums with rough brown bark and Salmon gums with smooth bark

that turns a glorious salmon-pink in late summer.

Waddi Forest

On the corner of Lampard Road a rock bearing a plaque reminds people of the one-teacher school that once stood on the site.

There was also a garage, store and telephone exchange, while on the south stands the Hall and tennis courts. A cricket pitch - made of concrete!

- lies hidden in the regrowth.

Waddi Forest was first settled in 1921 and has always been noted for the production of good quality wheat and sheep.

occur along the roadside.

attractive shrubs still

many of the very

since the last fire, and

in height with time

shrubby thicket varying

been covered in a

years. Originally the

whole area would have

years. Originally the

within the last 40

cleared for farming

which has only been

travels through land

road is sandy. It

Drive with care - this

Teasdale Road 23km

uplands.

This road climbs away from the valley to the

Coorow - Maya Road 4km

ground with characteristic shrubby vegetation.

Between the salt areas are "islands" of higher

the long dry summers.

string of beads, drawing on this supply during

fresh water in its fleshy stems which look like a

For example, during the rains Samphire stores

have a better look.

the high salinity, and it is well worth stopping to

plants have fascinating adaptations to cope with

salt pans, and flows only after heavy rain. The

This ancient river is now reduced to a series of

Supporting

magnificent

Salmon Gum and

Gimlet forest.

Notice how clearing

of the original

vegetation has led to the

spread of saline areas adjoining salt lake systems

and along drainage lines.

Coorow - Latham Road 26km

Like most roads in early - settled areas this is only

one chain (20m) wide, leaving little space on the

roadside for remnant vegetation.

Along the roadside are some fine examples of the

original woodland trees, York Gums with rough

brown bark and Salmon gums with smooth bark

that turns a glorious salmon-pink in late summer.

Waddi Forest

On the corner of Lampard Road a rock bearing a

plaque reminds people of the one-teacher school

that once stood on the site.

There was also a garage, store and telephone

exchange, while on the south stands the Hall and

tennis courts. A cricket pitch - made of concrete!

- lies hidden in the regrowth.

Waddi Forest was first settled in 1921 and has

always been noted for the production of good

quality wheat and sheep.

occur along the roadside.

attractive shrubs still

many of the very

since the last fire, and

in height with time

shrubby thicket varying

been covered in a

years. Originally the

whole area would have

years. Originally the

within the last 40

cleared for farming

which has only been

travels through land

road is sandy. It

Drive with care - this

Teasdale Road 23km

uplands.

This road climbs away from the valley to the

Coorow - Maya Road 4km

ground with characteristic shrubby vegetation.

Between the salt areas are "islands" of higher

the long dry summers.

string of beads, drawing on this supply during

fresh water in its fleshy stems which look like a

For example, during the rains Samphire stores

have a better look.

the high salinity, and it is well worth stopping to

plants have fascinating adaptations to cope with

salt pans, and flows only after heavy rain. The

This ancient river is now reduced to a series of

Supporting

magnificent

Salmon Gum and

Gimlet forest.

Notice how clearing

of the original

vegetation has led to the

spread of saline areas adjoining salt lake systems

and along drainage lines.

Coorow - Latham Road 26km

Like most roads in early - settled areas this is only

one chain (20m) wide, leaving little space on the

roadside for remnant vegetation.

Along the roadside are some fine examples of the

original woodland trees, York Gums with rough

brown bark and Salmon gums with smooth bark

that turns a glorious salmon-pink in late summer.

Waddi Forest

On the corner of Lampard Road a rock bearing a

plaque reminds people of the one-teacher school

that once stood on the site.

There was also a garage, store and telephone

exchange, while on the south stands the Hall and

tennis courts. A cricket pitch - made of concrete!

- lies hidden in the regrowth.

Waddi Forest was first settled in 1921 and has

always been noted for the production of good

quality wheat and sheep.

occur along the roadside.

attractive shrubs still

many of the very

since the last fire, and

in height with time

shrubby thicket varying

been covered in a

years. Originally the

whole area would have

years. Originally the

within the last 40

cleared for farming

which has only been

travels through land

road is sandy. It

Drive with care - this

Teasdale Road 23km

uplands.

This road climbs away from the valley to the

Coorow - Maya Road 4km

ground with characteristic shrubby vegetation.

Between the salt areas are "islands" of higher

the long dry summers.

string of beads, drawing on this supply during

fresh water in its fleshy stems which look like a

For example, during the rains Samphire stores

have a better look.

the high salinity, and it is well worth stopping to

plants have fascinating adaptations to cope with

salt pans, and flows only after heavy rain. The

This ancient river is now reduced to a series of

Supporting

magnificent

Salmon Gum and

Gimlet forest.

Notice how clearing

of the original

vegetation has led to the

spread of saline areas adjoining salt lake systems

and along drainage lines.

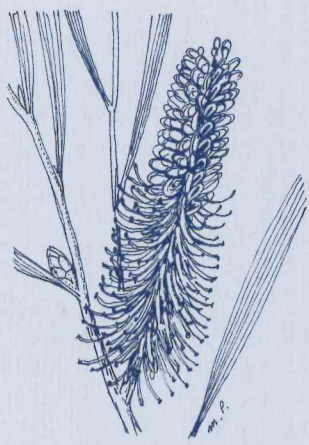
Coorow - Latham Road 26km

Like most roads in early - settled areas this is only

one chain (20m) wide, leaving little space on the

roadside for remnant vegetation.

Just after entering this road, the western roadside appears not to have many native plants on it, but watch out for a prostrate shrub, the unusual Rose Darwinia. These are some of the best specimens in the area.



Hakea francisiana
Pink Spike Hakea

Spring is the best time for colour.

Look out for tall Pink Spike Hakeas, cream Waxflowers, golden Wattles and many different Honey-myrtles - pink, mauve, yellow and especially the superb Scarlet Honey-myrtle.

Notice how, where the sandy soil has been disturbed, weeds quickly take over.

Thomas Road 9.3km

Again an upland road, traversing sand over gravel. There are many attractive mallees, with excellent nectar flow throughout the year which supports many small birds. Look out also for colourful shrubs such as Red Pokers and purple Firebush.

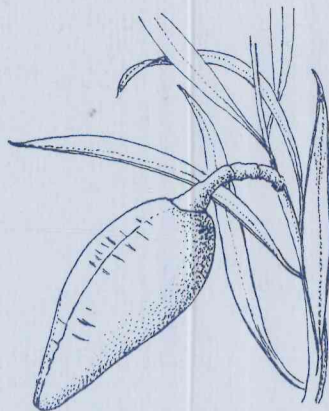
Randell Road

Detour along this road for a short stretch, to see what rural roads used to look like, before vehicles became wider and faster. The dense trees and shrubs create a beautiful green tunnel effect over the road.

Back on Thomas Road, there is a good view eastwards of a wide gently-sloping valley, characteristic of this landscape.

Gunyidi-Wubin Road 21.6km

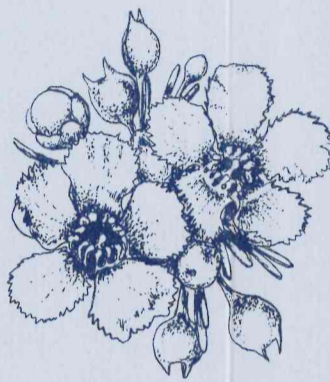
For the first 8km, the road is on the north side of salt lakes, where the water collects after rain. When the lakes dry out, the salt crystals glint in the sun. Around the shore is a woodland of York Gums with wattles, the leafless Ballart and Hop Bush forming an understory.



Xylomelum angustifolium
Woody Pear

Further west, the road crosses the Gunyidi Sandplain. The deep yellow sand was deposited here during a drier climatic period, blown by strong winds from a depression east of Coorow. The dominant plants are Banksias, Woody Pear and Sandplain Cypress.

Stop at Gunyidi Pool (now usually dry) for a good look at this very rich community. There are excellent examples of Pear-Fruited Mallee, which has large red or cream hanging flowers that open in spring. Among the tussocks of Cord Rush will be found many small plants such as orchids, trigger plants and everlasting, together with colourful shrubs such as feather flowers and Coppercups.



Pileanthus filifolius
Summer Coppercups

Coorow West

West of the Midlands Road, the Darling Fault is the boundary of the ancient Yilgarn Shield. The fault line lies in a depression occupied by a chain of lakes and creeks.

Land to the west of the fault has subsided, probably when Australia was breaking away from the ancient continent of Gondwanaland, and has been filled with sediments. The soils are deep infertile sands with some gravelly areas.

Most of the roadsides are wider than needed for traffic to preserve them as a wildflower drives.

Coorow Shire acknowledges the value of these roadsides for conservation and tourism and agrees, so far as is possible, to manage them so as to protect and enhance the native vegetation.

The Marchagee Track 31km

This road, which follows an early route used by fisherman heading for the coast, travels through dense scrub of Banksia, Woody Pear and Northern Chittick. It passes between Watheroo National Park and Lake Pinjarrega Nature Reserve.

This is a rich area with many different plants, at its best during late winter and spring. Featherflowers are especially abundant, including Mueller's Featherflower, whose spindly stems hold up sheaves of deep maroon flowers in November. Look along the edges of firebreaks for small plants such as Rush-like Leschenaultia, Sundews and Button Daisies.



Verticordia muelleriana
Mueller's Feather-flower

