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DANDARAGAN DRIVES



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Want to see WA's wildflowers?

One of the best areas is the northern sandplains.

On these infertile soils grows what is acknowledged to be one of the richest and most diverse flowering plant communities in the world. Over 1200 different plants can be found!

Most of the area is covered with a shrubby sandplain community which the Aborigines called 'Kwongan'.

Even for the Wildflower State, the variety of plants in the community is extraordinary.

Come and see for yourself!

Shire of Dandaragan

The best place to start studying the northern kwongan is Dandaragan Shire.

About 170 km north of Perth, the Shire has 1515 km of roads, many of them with roadsides especially widened to conserve the wildflowers.

This leaflet gives just one suggestion for a beautiful wildflower drive.

There are many others for you to discover.

1. Jurien East Road

Travelling west from Brand Highway, the road winds between breakaways, giving sweeping views of the countryside.

The laterite hilltops are covered in dense kwongan dominated by Blackboys and low prickly shrubs including many Hakeas and Dryandras.

The slopes have sandy soil covered with taller, (but equally prickly!) shrubs, one of the most common being Needles and Corks, whose stabbing leaves do not seem to deter honeyeaters

attracted to the copious nectar in spring. In early summer the spectacularly beautiful Scarlet Featherflower makes a brilliant show, especially when backed by the soft grey of Smokebush.



Scarlet Feather Flower

In the deeper soils of the valleys, woodland dominated by Banksias and WA Christmas Trees develops, with some Eucalypts along the streams.

To the west of Mumbinea Road the vegetation changes as we pass into the coastal kwongan, where Acorn Banksia provides a lovely display of colour in late summer as its orange and silver flowers come into full bloom. They have lots of nectar and are relished by birds, including the noisy Black Cockatoos, which rip the flowers apart in their search for sweetness.

Close to the coast a thicket of Coastal Wattle, Parrot Bush and One-sided Bottlebrush is very colourful from spring through to early summer.

2. Coomallo picnic spot (picnic tables)

Shady rest area beside the usually dry Coomalloo Creek.

In late winter and early spring walk upstream to find 10 species of orchids and many other delicate plants. Notice the unusually tall Zamias, a cycad with large palm-like leaves. Early settlers collected fuzz from around the leaf bases to fill cushions.

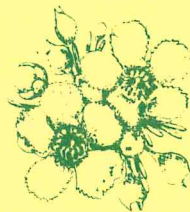
A walk to the top of the hill is rewarding for its scenic views as well as giving a good look at a wealth of wildflowers. Spring is the best time. Featherflowers, Starflowers, Darwineas and Black Kangaroo Paws are common. In a 15 minute ramble it would be easy to spot more than 50 different kinds of flowers.

3. Brand Highway

Brand Highway is one of the finest wildflower roads in Western Australia. It is named after a former Premier, Sir David Brand who was a strong advocate of the policy of creating wide road reserves for flora conservation. He believed that our native plants were of great value to WA from both a tourist and a conservation standpoint, and the beauty of the wildflowers along Brand Highway supports his belief.

The Highway traverses rich kwongan which has subtle variations in species composition from south to north.

In early spring the yellow of wattles contrasts with red-brown Daviesias, including the unusual Staghorn Bush, and the blue of Dampieras. Later on in spring there is a rich kaleidoscope of colour and form, including the extraordinary Black Kangaroo Paws. In summer the colours change again, and the grey of Smokebush backs brilliant magenta Summer Coppercups and Yellow Kangaroo Paws.



Truly a fitting tribute to the man who made preservation of roadside wildflowers a cornerstone of Government conservation policy.

Summer Coppercups

4. Cantabilling Road

Runs along the northern side of the Hill River, whose fringing woodland of Flooded Gums is home for many different birds.

~~Walgait District Park and Shell Museum~~
~~Walgait District Park and Shell Museum~~

5. Mumbinea Road

This road runs parallel to the coast, inland of the limestone hills, through an area once covered with a low woodland of Pricklybark, WA Christmas Trees and Slender, Holly-leaved and Firewood Banksias.

Sand mining occurs here, and the mining infrastructure can be seen to the west.

Small depressions alongside the road are covered with Paperbarks, Tea-trees and Featherflowers which are softly pink in early summer.

Hill River Bridge (no facilities)

On Mumbinea Road, just north of the Hill River bridge, turn east onto Cantabilling Road for 100m then south onto a track which winds into the Flooded Gums along the Hill River. Take care, it can be boggy!

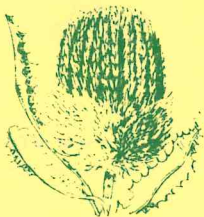
In winter and early spring the flood plains alongside the river are an excellent area to search for orchids and other delicate plants.

6. Cadda Road

and

8. Bibby Road

These roads pass through kwongan which varies in height according to the time since the last fire. The climax is the woodland of Slender and Firewood Banksias. Slender Banksia has narrow yellow spikes in summer, while Firewood Banksia's reddish pink (sometimes lemon) flowers are produced in winter. Badgingarra N.P. is along these roads.



Firewood Banksia

7. Badgingarra National Park (no facilities)

This National Park is renowned for its variety of wildflowers. Kwongan of various heights covers the whole of its area. Fires occur periodically, and the vegetation community changes in appearance and composition during the years following a fire.

An excellent walking trail has been laid out on the eastern edge of the Park, near Badgingarra. The trail has numbered stops, and leads to a magnificent lookout. To get best value from the trail, guide booklets can be obtained from the roadhouse in Badgingarra.

9. Cervantes Road

This road traverses coastal kwongan which is very attractive during spring and early summer.

10. Nambung National Park

(BBQ and Toilets)

Famous for the extraordinary limestone formations "The Pinnacles", Nambung also contains interesting plant communities. On the coastal side, where there is loose sand, a dense heath of Coastal Wattle and Parrot Bush develops, which is a magnet for honeyeaters.

Further inland, on limestone areas, is a lower and more varied heath, often dominated by Curly Grass. In winter and

early spring the large purple flowers of the Rough Daisybush are a good place to search for the many spectacular Jewel Beetles which can be found in this Park.

In sheltered valleys, Tuarts grow. These stately trees are almost at the northernmost limit of their distribution here. In winter many orchids grow in these open glades, look for Pink Fairies which like limestone and are especially common.



Pink Fairies

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.



Staghorn Bush

BEST TIMES FOR TRAVEL

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

During the summer, temperatures can be quite high, so plan to spend the hottest part of the day in the shade or by the coast.

Facilities available:

Badgingarra: food, fuel,
no accommodation.

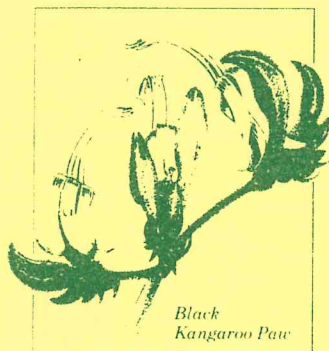
Cervantes: food, fuel,
Caravan Park, Cottages, Motel.

Jurien: food, fuel,
Caravan Park, Cottages, Motel.

Further Information

For further information please contact:

Central West Coast
Tourist Promotion Committee
Dandaragan WA 6507
Jurien WA 6516



*Black
Kangaroo Paw*



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