



ENDANGERED!



FITZGERALD RIVER WOOLLYBUSHES

Fitzgerald River National Park, on Western Australia's south coast, is home to around 1 800 plant species, of which at least 75 are endemic. The genus *Adenanthos* is represented by eight species and one subspecies. These woollybushes are the oval-leaf adenanthos (*A. ellipticus*), Gairdner River woollybush (*A. cacomorpha*), Labillardiere's woollybush (*A. labillardierei*), Fitzgerald woollybush (*A. dobagii*), veined adenanthos (*A. venosus*), yellow flowered woollybush (*A. flavidiflorus*), wedge-leaf woollybush (*A. cuneatus*), shiny-leaf adenanthos (*A. glabrescens* subsp. *exasperatus*) and mountain woollybush (*A. oreophilus*).

Fitzgerald woollybush and oval-leaf adenanthos have been declared as "rare flora". Fitzgerald woollybush is known only from three populations occurring on low quartzite hills in the east of the park. It has darker green foliage and cream and red flowers. Oval-leaf adenanthos occurs in a few scattered populations along

the coastal quartzite Barren Ranges system. First discovered on East Mount Barren, a population is now known from the Thumb Peak Range in the central wilderness. It grows as a sparse shrub to about three metres, with large elliptical leaves and pale orange flowers.

The Gairdner River and shiny-leaf woollybushes are rare, but require further surveys to confirm their conservation status. Gairdner River woollybush has not been collected since 1975 and is known only from three populations, one in the north-west of the park and the other two just outside the park, that are proving difficult to relocate. The species may be a hybrid between the yellow flowered and wedge-leaf woollybushes. Shiny-leaf adenanthos is known from only two populations separated by 150 km. One is in the mid-west of the park on low rises of dark lateritic gravel over clay, and the other on a hillside east of Ravensthorpe.

Labillardiere's woollybush is rare, but not considered threatened. It was named in honour of the French botanist Jacques-Julien Houtou de Labillardiere for his contribution to the knowledge of the genus. It occurs in scattered populations along the Barren Ranges from the central wilderness, east to the Eyre Range and north to Mount Drummond. It grows as an erect shrub to about a metre and a half, with distinctive claret coloured flowers.

The remaining species are not considered threatened.

Like many other plants in the family Proteaceae, *Adenanthos* are susceptible to dieback. Preventing the spread of dieback in the Fitzgerald River National Park is dealt with in a management plan for the park and, along with the implementation of the plan's other strategies, the long-term survival of the Fitzgerald River woollybushes looks brighter.

By Nathan McQuoid

LANDSCOPE

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Hand in hand with nature. This brushtail possum is just one of the animals studied during fauna surveys of the Batalling Forest. See page 16.



Lush vegetation and a welcoming smile greet you as you arrive at Mt Hart Homestead, the 'Oasis in the Leopolds'. See page 48.



'Fire, Wind and Water', on page 42, tells of recent research into the rehabilitation of exploration tracks in the Rudall River area of the Little Sandy Desert.



Deep beneath the Southern Ocean lies the wreck of the Sanko Harvest. This rotting hull is now an artificial reef attracting marine life and divers alike. See page 23.



Plantations of brown mallet in the early 1900's began a chain of events that resulted in the 'Woodland Wonderland' of Dryandra. See page 28.

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COVER

Woylies prefer clumped, relatively open vegetation with sandy soils that are easy to dig. They are found, among other places, at Batalling Forest and the Dryandra Woodland. See stories on pages 16 and 28.

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