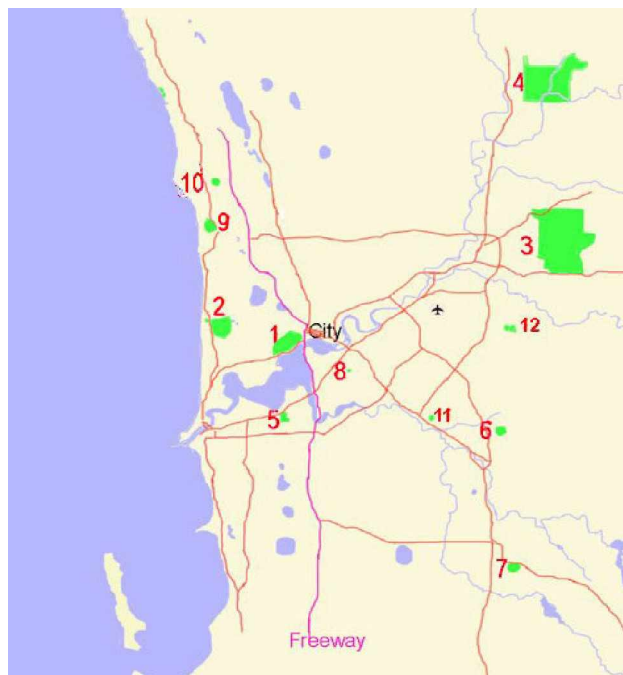


# Wildflower sites within the Perth area



## **1 Kings Park**

Almost at the top of St. Georges Terrace and thus on the doorstep of the city. Much of it is bushland, but there are extensive developed areas including a Botanic Garden

The park is now quite different from its original state. It was a low forest of Jarrah and Banksias, but the early settlers cut most of the big trees (you can occasionally see the stumps) and frequent fires have thinned the bushland and encouraged the sheoaks (*Allocasuarinas*) rather than the Banksias. In most areas you can see charred branches on the trees and burnt stumps.

By Perth standards, the soil is relatively fertile and this has meant a large invasion of weeds mostly from South Africa: veldt grass, a gladiolus, bridal creeper. Extensive areas have been sprayed to control the veldt grass permitting native species to increase. Of these, the red and green kangaroo paw is prominent and Kings Park is a good place to see it.

Drive along Fraser Av. and admire the stately eucalypts. They are lemon-scented gums and come from NSW and Queensland! Leave your car in the large park behind the shops. Walk to the war memorial and admire the vista and then to the treetop walk. This will deliver you to the Botanic garden. Wander through the garden, cross the road to the "DNA" tower (you will surely recognise it) and enter the paths to the right of the tower. These will take you through an area of bush in which many of the native plants are identified. Work your way back to the car park.

Continue along Forrest Drive admiring the views of the river as you descend the hill and make a round trip by choosing May Drive. You may park on the roadside to further explore the bush.

## **2 Bold park**

Drive west along Cambridge St through the suburb of Floreat. The road becomes a double carriage way after the Floreat Forum shopping centre - and changes its name to Oceanic Drive. If you wish, turn into Perry Drive, and visit Perry House, the office of the society. If it is a Tuesday or a Thursday between 10 am and 2 pm call in and buy some books!

Otherwise take the second exit from Oceanic Drive after Perry Drive Drive. (The first exit takes you to the Quarry Amphitheatre)

Bold Park is bigger than Kings Park - but not as well known. It comprises near-coastal dunes and ridges and therefore has a different flora. It has several diverse ecosystems including banksia woodland and low heaths. It too has been invaded by South African weeds with a *Pelargonium* being prominent and choking out other species.

The park can be entered from several spots on its boundary. If you enter from Oceanic drive, as we indicate, you pass an impressive entry statement. Continue up the hill and park your car, then walk up the curved board walk to the top of the hill and extensive views.

Return to the car park and study the map on the notice board. It will suggest walks you could take depending on the time and energy you have - but at least walk along the path to the west a few hundred meters to a small lookout from which you can look down to the beach. The bush to the right (north) of this path was burned in a wildfire in 2002. The regeneration has been managed to control weeds. Contrast the high density of veldt grass on the south side (unburnt) side of the path.

If you are interested in innovative use of local plants in gardens, visit the Ecology Centre garden next door to Perry House.

### **3 John Forrest National Park**

Sir John has given his name to a fine park on the edge of the Darling scarp and overlooking Perth. Travel eastwards on the Great Eastern Highway, past the domestic airport terminal, and up the steep hill called Greenmount.) The entrance is on the left and is clearly marked

A few hundred meters from the entrance, there is a fine lookout over the plain. Below the lookout, it is fairly steep but if you are nimble enough there are usually some interesting flowers there. The tourist drive forms a somewhat distorted "M". Near the first point of the M there are some granite rocks which have a different suite of flowers. Near the valley of the M there is usually a nice patch of Verticordias. You can return to the highway from here if you choose. At the second point of the M is the picnic area and tavern. From here there are some pleasant walks - described in CALM's website. We suggest that you go downhill from the car park, cross a small stream, and walk along the valley either upstream or downstream. Both give a fine display of flowers in spring and both lead to waterfalls. The downstream choice eventually leads to a tunnel through which the railway used to run.

From here you can return to the highway via the last leg of the M.

### **4 Walyunga**

Make your way to the Great Northern Highway. Just north of Upper Swan you pass a fenced reserve on your left which preserves the habitat of the rare Western Swamp Tortoise. Soon after that there is a sign indicating the Walyunga Park entrance on the right. The road passes over a "break-away" which forms the top of the hill. You might wish to stop at the top of the hill. Or continue down slope far enough for the prickly bush (it's a Dryandra) to have thinned out - else it's hard going. There are good plants to see as you move up slope from the Wandoo trees on the left side of the road. Have a good look at some of the laterite rocks. You will see rounded silica stones embedded in them. This is because we are close to the edge of the granite but on an ancient river deposit and the laterite has formed from this deposit rather than from the granite.

The bottom of the valley, and the river, are rather scenic - but the soil is more fertile and there are few wildflowers. The river here consists of a series of pools and rapids. You may think of the rapids as formed by harder bands of rocks weathering more slowly. But to the aborigines the river was formed by the great snake and the rounded boulders of the rapids were formed when she paused for a toilet stop.

The river bank makes a good spot for lunch. There are picnic tables and barbeques.

For more information on this park, check out CALM's web site.

### **5 Wireless Hill Park**

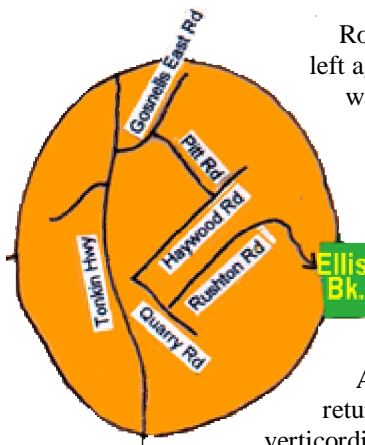
The name of this reserve derives from its original purpose of providing a buffer around a radio transmission aerial. This has become a telecommunications museum, but it is only open on Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

From the city, take the Freeway south to Canning Bridge and then turn right into Canning Highway. The reserve is about 3 km along this road and is on the left. Take the road just before the reserve and avoid the turns into "No Through Roads". The road to the park is signposted.

Wireless Hill Park has a very good range of flowers in spring. Red and green kangaroo paws are prolific and it is one of the few places near Perth where there is also a good crop of the smaller cat's paws - and if you look very closely you may even see a hybrid. There are also many orchids. Early in Spring there are Greenhoods, then Donkey orchids and, later, Spider orchids.

## 6 Ellis Brook

From Perth take the Freeway South. Exit to Manning road. Continue to Albany Highway and turn right into it. Continue to the intersection with Tonkin Hwy and turn left into it. Turn right into Gosnells Road, East; right into Pitt Rd; right again (!) into Haywood Rd; left into Quarry Rd; and left again into Rushton Rd. Enter the park and continue to the end of the road for the waterfall walk.



In winter and spring, Ellis Brook cascades over a rock bar to form one of the few waterfalls in the south west. It then proceeds along a valley it has cut into the side of the scarp. A made path leads up parallel to the stream and gives you good close-ups of a wide range of flowers while bathed in the scent of a "hazel" which grows along the stream. Views from the top are spectacular - and are earned, as the last stages of the climb are rather steep. But even half way is pretty good!

A good second stop is in the car park near the toilets which will be on your right as you return. Park here and explore the hillside opposite. There is usually a good display of verticordias here.

## 7 Bungendore Park

Bungendore Park is 33 km SE of Perth. Enter Albany Highway at Armadale and turn into Dryandra Drive about 5 km from Armadale

Bungendore Park is 498 ha of bushland. It carries a mixture of marri and jarrah trees with good areas of banksia and dryandra and some wandoo trees. There is a low ground flora with lots of flowers. It is a favourite place for bush walkers and bird watchers

## 8 Kensington Bushland

Kensington Bushland Reserve is a 9 ha bushland remnant in the Town of Victoria Park, Perth, Western Australia. It is bounded by Baron-Hay Court, Kensington, and Etwell Street, Victoria Park.

This is the best-preserved remnant urban bushland between the Swan and Canning Rivers. It is a typical jarrah-banksia woodland on Bassendean Sand.

The greatest species diversity is in the understorey, with in excess of 150 native species in just 9 ha

It is described in detail in an excellent website.

## 9 Star Swamp

Star Swamp is to the west of Marmion Ave and between Beach Rd and North Beach Rd. A good place to start is from North Beach Rd (which is south of Beach Rd!). Turn right into Groat St west of North Beach primary school. This leads you to a good parking area

Despite the name, most of this reserve is firm ground. It is a large piece of bushland with an extensive network of walking paths.

The vegetation is an open banksia-eucalypt woodland with an extensive ground flora. here was a large wildfire in early 1998 but by 2005 it was again in good condition

## 10 Hepburn Heights

Hepburn Heights is located off Hepburn Av. about half way between the Mitchell Freeway and Marmion Av. If you choose to travel north on the freeway take the left exit to Hepburn Av. traveling west. Turn right from Hepburn Av. at Walter Padbury Blvd. It is just past a small group of shops. Then take the left branch off the round-about into Parkhurst Rise and follow the road. Park in the cull-de-sac.

This is a remnant of a much larger piece of bushland and was only retained after a titanic struggle with developers. It is one of the better pieces of bushland in the coastal plain for the array of flowers and has fewer weeds than better-known areas. It is a great place for almost 6 months of "spring" starting from the Templetonia flowers in July.

The best areas for flowers are in the upper zone. Here there is some limestone from which the top soil has been eroded. It usually has a good array of flowers. You will see plenty if you follow the made path but there is a narrow track which

leads up the hill and takes you to nice areas. It is just past the bench seat. The lower areas can be reached from the left fork in the made path a bit further on. The soil fertility is higher here and there are more weeds.

### **11 Brixton St**

Travel along Albany Highway from Perth, turning left at the lights at Wanaping Rd. Cross the railway line and continue for about 700m to reach the intersection with Brixton St. Turn left and, after about 100m, turn left into Alton St. Park at the end of this street and enter the reserve by the gate.

In contrast to other areas, which are mainly situated on sand dunes of varying ages, this reserve comprises some of the vegetation of the heavy soils of the coastal plain. It is situated on soils derived from river deposits. The soils are heavy and drain slowly - mainly because of extensive formation of ironstone in the sub-soil. Consequently, the plants are rather different

Best time to visit is rather later in Spring - say from late September - when the pools are drying a little and the many water-loving plants are flowering. You will notice the bright flowers of Robin Red Breast. It likes wet feet. The small tree (or large shrub) with the pea flowers and the broom-like habit is Swish bush - *Viminaria*. It too rather likes having its feet wet and grows well here. Towards the end of spring there are large areas of a rather attractive *Verticordia* in flower.

### **12 Zig Zag**

Take Great Eastern Highway from Perth, enter the Midland bypass on the eastern side of the airport, and then turn right (east) into Kalamunda Rd. You could continue on this road to Kalamunda (which is quite a pretty spot) or you could turn left into Gooseberry Hill Rd. The aim is to enter Williams road which runs parallel to the old rail track and at its northern end changes into Lascelles Parade - which, in turn, becomes the zig-zag.

For many years a railway crawled up the scarp to Kalamunda. In order to negotiate the steep slopes engineers created a "zig-zag" in which the train reversed direction at the end of each "zig" in order to enter the "zag". The rails are long gone and a tourist road *descends* the slope. (You can only enter from the top.) There are good views over the plain from the top and many different places to stop including the ends of the zigs. The flowers at the top are characteristic of the exposed parts of the hills and put on a wonderful display in September. Lower there are some moist gullies with rather different plants.

This is just one of several good sites on the "front" edge of the hills - often referred to as "the scarp" or the "Darling Scarp". Lesmurdie Falls is another good one: Take Falls Rd off Lesmurdie Rd.