

Plants of Mt Majura

Living with Nature on your Doorstep

More than 200 native species of trees, shrubs, flowering herbs, ferns and grasses inhabit the woodlands and forest of Mount Majura nature reserve - and each year new ones are identified.

For the full list, photo galleries and dates of the annual wildflower walks visit www.majura.org

Nature's Floriade

Impressive displays of flowers decorate Mt Majura Nature Reserve through Spring and Summer each year. If you take a closer look amongst the tussock grass, under the mighty Eucalyptus trees you will find delicate little flowers such as Daisies, Lilies, Bluebells and Orchids. The reserve also hosts the critically endangered Box-Gum Grassy Woodland ecological community, which provides a home to many special birds and animals.

Sadly, past stock grazing, weed invasion, and present overgrazing

by Kangaroos, Hares and Rabbits have greatly diminished the diversity and abundance of native plant species and some are threatened by extinction. Local volunteers are working hard to turn this trend around.



Hoary Sunray *Leucocrysum albicans* carpets the northwest slope in spring. Courtesy Waltraud Pix.

Rushes and sedges can be found in wetter areas, such as in drainage lines and seepage sites. The grasslike Mat-rushes *Lomandra sp.* grow happily in the shallow soils of Mt Majura's ridges and slopes.



Redanther Wallaby Grass *Joycea pallida*. Courtesy Waltraud Pix.

Wildflowers and shrubs

Mt Majura has a colourful variety of flowering herbs and shrubs, from the

dainty and delicate pink Native Geranium *Geranium solanderi*, to the bright orange Parrot Peas. After a good Winter's rain the Hoary Sunray *Leucocrysum albicans*, a pretty daisy with white petals and a yellow centre, can be found carpeting the slope next to The Fair.

Join the annual walks hosted by Friends of Mount Majura to explore the diverse wildflowers that grow on your doorstep.



Top: Early Nancy *Warmbea dioca*.

Bottom left: Creamy Candles *Stackhousia monogyna*, Bottom right: Parrot-Pea *Dillwynia sericea*. Courtesy Waltraud Pix.

Orchids

There are at least 15 different kinds of Orchids in the reserve. The Canberra Spider Orchid *Arachnorchis actensis* is a beautiful, but endangered species. It will flower after a wet Winter and grow to about 4-9 cms. Most orchids are delicate plants

that are easily damaged if trampled - so please keep to tracks when visiting the reserve.



Spider Orchid *Arachnorchis actensis*. Courtesy Waltraud Pix.

Grasses, sedges and rushes

Walking around the dryer areas of the reserve you may be able to spot tussocks of Snowgrass and Spear-grass. Large tussocks of Redanther Wallaby Grass *Joycea pallida*, growing along the western slopes, can be identified by their distinctive orange-red seed heads in early summer.



Trees

If you take a stroll through the dry forest along the upper slopes of the reserve you will come across several different kinds of Eucalyptus. These include Brittle gum *Eucalyptus mannifera*, Bundy Box *Eucalyptus goniocalyx* and the distinctive Scribbly Gum *Eucalyptus rossii*.

You can spot a Scribbly Gum by the unusual scribbles on its creamy white bark. These are caused by the larvae of the Scribbly Gum Moth *Ogmograptis scribula* burrowing in the bark to feed.

Alongside the Eucalyptus Mt Majura is also home to the largest stand of Drooping She-Oak *Allocasuarina verticillata* in the ACT. The tree has tiny, barely visible leaves and you are more likely to notice the green needle-like stems that carry out the sugar producing (photosynthesis) function of leaves. Listen out for the sound the wind makes when it passes through these unusual stems.

Moving into the lower slopes you will begin to find the rough barked Apple Box *Eucalyptus bridgesiana* and the critically endangered Box-Gum Woodland.



The cones of the Drooping She-oak *Allocasuarina verticillata* are the main food source of the endangered Glossy Black Cockatoo *Calyptorhynchus lathami*.
Courtesy Waltraud Pix and Geoffrey Dabb (inset bird).

Box-Gum Grassy Woodland

Mt Majura is home to one of the few remaining stands of Yellow Box *Eucalyptus melliodora* in Australia. This magnificent tree can grow to 40 metres tall and is regarded as one of the best native trees for honey production. Where Yellow Box grows with Blakely's Red Gum *Eucalyptus blakelyi* it forms a canopy for a species-rich understorey of native tussock grasses, herbs and scattered shrubs. This ecological community, known as Box-Gum Grassy Woodland, is critically endangered across Australia.



The distinctive Scribbly Gum *Eucalyptus rossii* and close-up of the bark. There are some memorable specimens on Mt Majura. Courtesy Waltraud Pix.