

9. Imagine as you sit in this idyllic spot, hearing trucks on the Western Highway and looking to the cleared paddocks, how this place may have looked prior to European settlement. The local aboriginal people, the Jardwadjali would have used the pools along the creek for water and catching fish or yabbies. The fruit and seeds of plants such as the native Cherry and Cranberry Heath would have been harvested as would the tubers of orchids, yams and Chocolate lilies. Their interaction with their environment, which is sadly lacking in our modern world, would have been a close balanced one.

Yam



10. On the old parish maps this reserve is listed as quarry reserve. There are 2 areas in the reserve where it looks as though blocks of granite have been removed. Luckily the quantity or quality wasn't good enough and this Bushland Reserve is managed for its considerable biodiversity values by Parks Victoria.

11. This is the bird watching spot. Sit here and wait for bird songs and activity. You may see or hear Superb Blue Wrens, the chubby Brown tree Creeper, the communal White Browed Babblers and Choughs. Parks and reserves are not only important refuges for our wildlife but also for us!

12. Nature does an amazing job of protecting soils and in most vegetation communities grasses, herbs, leaf litter, mosses and lichens cover the soil. When soil cover is disturbed it is an invitation for weed species to invade. In the moister months you will see Coral Lichen and an amazing array of mosses and fungi in this south facing area.



Cranberry Heath



Flame Heath

13. Some of the shrubs you may see in this section are in the Heath family – Epacridacea. You may see the prostrate Cranberry Heath, Daphne Heath, Honey-pots or the Flame Heath which make a spectacular autumn display and provides nectar for honeyeaters. Other plants in this section are the rare hop bush *Dodonea procumbens* and *Calytrix alpestris*.

14. Black Range Landcare Group hope you have enjoyed this walk. We are fortunate to have many Parks and reserves in this area and you are encouraged to explore these. At the Stawell Visitor Information Centre you can get directions to the Ironbarks Nature Trail. To contact Black Range Landcare Group, ph Project Platypus 5358 4410.

Please make sure you take any rubbish with you.

This walking trail was developed by Black Range Landcare Group with the assistance of Project Platypus and a grant from DSE.

GRANITE POOLS NATURE TRAIL

In Sisters Rocks Bushland Reserve

WALK NOTES



Please note there is no entry from the Western Highway Melbourne bound traffic (continue to Panrock Road and turn).

1. You will see four different eucalypt species on this walk, each occupying a different niche in the landscape. Long-leaf Box, *Eucalyptus goniolocayx* is a hardy tree which thrives here in these shallow stony soils. It is a sprawling "untidy" tree with hard leathery leaves and distinctive seed pods. When you get to the creek you will see the stately, smooth trunked Red Gum – *E. camaldulensis* and the fine leaved Yellow Box – *E. melliodora*. Towards the end of the walk, the smooth trunked Yellow Gum – *E. leucoxylon*, is distinguished from the Red Gum by its large cup shaped fruits.



Euc leucoxylon (buds & fruit)



Euc melliodora

2. There is a very diverse range of understorey species in this reserve ranging from tall shrubs to prostrate shrubs, grasses, herbs, rushes and orchids. In this area you might see the red flowered heath *As-troloma conostephiodes*, the cornflower blue *Brunonia australis*, the unusual pea *Platylobium obtusangulum*, the fleshy pigface *Carpobrotus* sp and more than 10 species of orchids.

Common

Fial Pea

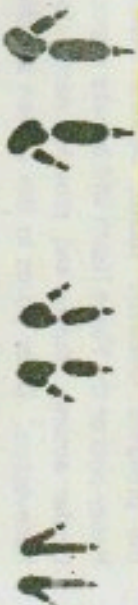


3. The only thing more aussie than a gum tree is a wattle, and there are 3 species found in this area. The robust 2m prickly shrub is *Acacia paradoxa*, not a people friendly plant but loved by birds such as Blue Wrens and Babblers who welcome its prickly refuge.

Acacia pynantha, with its leaves a little gum tree-like is Australia's floral emblem and massed flowering in spring shows why. The spiny leaved wattle *Acacia genistifolia* has masses of pale flowers in autumn. There are over 950 species of wattles in Australia.



4. Many birds, reptiles, bats, gliders and possums rely on the hollows provided by trees for nesting or roosting sites. Sometimes fallen logs and branches can provide the same service for our wildlife. Tidying up the bush and removing standing dead trees reduces habitat for fauna. Because most of our fauna is nocturnal you may not see the Antechinus, Owllet Nightjar, Leaf-tailed Gecko or Sugar Glider found here. However you can keep your eye out for scats or tracks.



5. The vegetation community here has changed from the Heathy Woodland to a more open Grassy Woodland. Kangaroo, Wallaby and Spear Grasses are some of the many species of grasses. In spring time the intertussock spaces will be full of sundews, Chocolate Lilies, Blue Squills, Twining Fringe Lily and Scaly Buttons.



Twining Fringe-lily

Sundew

6. Pleasant Creek arises in the Black Range and flows through the edge of Stawell and into Lake Lonsdale. In winter the water flows after rains and pools remain into summer time. Growing on the edge of the creek is the Scarlet Bottle Brush, whilst in the creek the robust rush is the weedy Spiny Rush. When the creek is dry it is possible to cross and do an extra walking loop.



7. Whilst the vegetation in this reserve is very diverse and rich there are some problems with weeds, such as the spiny rush in the creek and the velvet grass in the lower section. Rabbits too love the sandy rocky soil and weed and rabbit control will need to be ongoing. Often mistaken for a weed is the lovely Mistletoe, clumps of which parasitise its host, often a eucalypt. Look for the yellowish clumps in the branches and if you're lucky the brilliant Mistletoe bird eating the berries.



8. Take a seat here and listen for frogs. Frogs can be identified by sight, by call or by identifying the tadpoles. Frogs you may here a Bibron's Toadlet, Brown Tree frog, Common Eastern Froglet, Pobble-bonk (Eastern Banjo frog). To identify the frog you may have seen or heard, go online to frogs.org.au