

## **11 Manna Gum Riparian Forest - Central Highlands (EVC 18 Riparian Forest)**

Grouping plants into Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC's) is an artificial means of grouping plants which commonly occur together in similar vegetation communities. This can be determined by the type of soil, rainfall, moisture level retained in the soil, altitude and slope (eg low-lying, flat, foothills, mountains), aspect (north facing, south facing) and amount of canopy and resulting sunlight (from open to closed forest and rainforest). Where a certain combination of these factors recurs, the plant community is likely to be made up of a similar group of species.

Within a typical community there may be a single vegetation layer or up to 3 different layers, known as upper storey, middle storey and lower (or ground) storey.

The same plant may occur in a number of different EVC's. Not all plants listed for a particular community will occur everytime that community is encountered. Some plants may be more common in one section of the Shire of Yarra Ranges, but may not occur in another section even though the EVC is the same. Other plants may only occur in a specific EVC. "Indicator Species" may be common to one EVC only or may be a group that almost always tend to occur together. They help to identify the EVC.

All plants in this Guide to the Indigenous Plants of the Shire of Yarra Ranges have been found within the Shire, although some plants may now be locally rare or extinct. It can never be a definitive list. Many plant communities throughout the Shire are now degraded or no longer exist as urbanisation, agricultural and forestry pursuits and weed invasion have changed the local landscape. Lists have been collated using often small remnant patches which may not give an accurate overall picture of the original plant community.

The vegetation classes used within the Shire are similar to the EVC's used by the Department of Sustainability and the Environment. However they differ in that sometimes classes have been split into separate areas within the Shire (Dandenong Ranges, Central Highlands, Upper Yarra) while others have been included in one all encompassing class. Classes reflect the dominant Indicator Species, usually a eucalypt.

### **Community structure**

A tall open forest along river banks of major watercourses and associated alluvial terraces with occasional occurrences in the heads of gullies leading into creeks and rivers. An upper storey to 50m high is dominated by *Eucalyptus viminalis* (Manna Gum) but may include other eucalypts. A sparse middle storey is dominated by wattles and broad-leaf species, especially Silver Wattle and Blackwood. A dense ground storey includes a variety of grasses, sedges, herbs and ferns. *Clematis aristata* is a common climber.

### **Distribution**

Scattered occurrences along watercourses and gullies at low altitudes in the northwest of the Shire to Healesville. The soil is fertile alluvium, regularly inundated and generally moist. Farming has had a significant impact on this vegetation in lowland areas.

### **Typical suburbs/areas occurring in this EVC are:**

Steels Creek, Dixons Creek, Chum Creek, Healesville, Fernshaw, Gruyere, Coldstream

## Indicator Species

### Upper Storey

*Eucalyptus viminalis* Manna Gum

### Middle Storey

*Acacia dealbata* Silver Wattle  
*Acacia melanoxylon* Blackwood  
*Bedfordia arborescens* Blanket-leaf  
*Hedycarya angustifolia* Austral Mulberry  
*Leptospermum grandifolium* Mountain Tea-tree  
*Lomatia fraseri* Tree Lomatia  
*Pimelea axiflora* Bootlace Bush  
*Calystegia marginata* Forest Bindweed  
*Clematis aristata* Mountain Clematis  
*Pandorea pandorana* ssp. *pandorana* Wonga Vine  
*Rubus parvifolius* Small-leaf Bramble

### Lower Storey

*Acaena novae-zelandiae* Bidgee-widgee  
*Adiantum aethiopicum* Common Maidenhair  
*Australina pusilla* Shade Nettle  
*Blechnum nudum* Fishbone Water-fern  
*Blechnum wattsi* Hard Water-fern  
*Calochlaena dubia* Common Ground-fern  
*Carex appressa* Tall Sedge  
*Dichondra repens* Kidney-weed  
*Echinopogon ovatus* Common Hedgehog-grass  
*Geranium potentilloides* Soft Cranesbill  
*Hydrocotyle geraniifolia* Forest Pennywort  
*Hydrocotyle hirta* Hairy Pennywort  
*Mentha laxiflora* Forest Mint  
*Plantago debilis* Shade Plantain  
*Poa ensiformis* Sword Tussock-grass  
*Polystichum proliferum* Mother Shield-fern  
*Stellaria flaccida* Forest Starwort  
*Tetrarrhena juncea* Forest Wire-grass  
*Viola hederacea* Ivy-leaf Violet

If you would like further information on the plants of this community go to Recommended Landscape Plants for this EVC or the Complete Species List. Plants are described and illustrated in the Yarra Ranges Local Plant Directory.