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**

Tall open forest, dominated by an upper storey principally of *Eucalyptus delegatensis* (Alpine Ash) or *E. regnans* (Mountain Ash) 30-50m high, sometimes with *E. cypellocarpa* (Mountain Grey Gum). A mid-storey shrub layer to 10m high features *Acacia dealbata* (Silver Wattle) and a variety of other large shrubs and tree ferns. The ground layer consists of tussock grasses, wire grass, lilies, herbs and ferns such as *Polystichum proliferum*.

**Distribution**

Scattered through the Shire in sheltered mountainous areas above 500m in high rainfall areas. Soils are deep, fertile and well-drained but may remain saturated for periods. This is the major sub-alpine vegetation in the Shire, occuring in the north eastern section of the Shire from the mountainous area around Mt. Donna Buang eastwards. It is often growing close to Mountain Ash Wet Forest.

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

North of Warburton, scattered in a line to Cambarville; either side of Woods Point Rd approaching Cumberland Junction, and from Shaw to the Triangle; on the Shire boundary east of the Upper Yarra Catchment.
**Indicator Species**

**Upper Storey**
- *Eucalyptus cypellocarpa* Mountain Grey Gum
- *Eucalyptus delegatensis* Alpine Ash
- *Eucalyptus regnans* Mountain Ash

**Middle Storey**
- *Acacia dealbata* Silver Wattle
- *Cassinia aculeata* Common Cassinia
- *Cyathea australis* Rough Tree-fern
- *Dicksonia antarctica* Soft Tree-fern
- *Olearia phlogopappa* Dusty Daisy-bush
- *Polyscias sambucifolia* ssp. 3 Elderberry Panax
- *Clematis aristata* Mountain Clematis

**Lower Storey**
- *Acaena novae-zelandiae* Bidgee-widgee
- *Dianella tasmanica* Tasman Flax-lily
- *Geranium potentilloides* Soft Cranesbill
- *Hydrocotyle hirta* Hairy Pennywort
- *Poa ensiformis* Sword Tussock-grass
- *Polystichum proliferum* Mother Shield-fern
- *Pteridium esculentum* Austral Bracken
- *Senecio linearifolius var. latifolius* Fireweed Groundsel
- *Stellaria flaccida* Forest Starwort
- *Tetrarrhena juncea* Forest Wire-grass
- *Viola eminens* 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.