

7 Mountain Grey Gum Damp Forest - Central Highlands (EVC 29 Damp 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

Open forest with an upper storey dominated by a mixture of eucalypts up to 40m high, usually including *Eucalyptus cypellocarpa* (Mountain Grey Gum) and *E. obliqua* (Messmate). Other eucalypts that may occur include *E. radiata* (Narrow-leaf Peppermint), *E. dives* (Broad-leaf Peppermint), *E. baxteri* (Brown Stringbark) and *E. sieberi* (Silver-top Ash). The middle storey contains a dense shrub layer to 3m high of broad-leaved species typical of wet forest mixed with species from dry forests. The ground layer includes climbers, bracken, herbs and grasses as well as a variety of moisture-dependent ferns including occasional tree ferns.

This community suffers from fires and weed invasion.

Distribution

Scattered but widespread from the northwest boundary of the Shire, looping to the east of Healesville and following the Yarra River and its major tributaries towards the east and south of the Shire. It is frequently abutting Mountain Ash Wet Forest on protected slopes at lower altitudes, and on exposed slopes and ridges up to 800m, on a range of fertile soils.

Typical suburbs/areas occurring in this EVC are:

Mt. Slide to Toolangi, Chum Creek, Fernshaw, Mt Toole-be-wong, Millgrove; Warburton south to Three Bridges; Big Pats Creek; east along the Yarra River and Armstrong Creek; following McMahons Creek; isolated patches within the Upper Yarra Catchment.

Indicator Species

Upper Storey

<i>Eucalyptus cypellocarpa</i>	Mountain Grey Gum
<i>Eucalyptus obliqua</i>	Messmate
<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	Blackwood

Middle Storey

<i>Acacia dealbata</i>	Silver Wattle
<i>Bedfordia arborescens</i>	Blanket-leaf
<i>Hedycarya angustifolia</i>	Austral Mulberry
<i>Olearia argophylla</i>	Musk Daisy-bush
<i>Pomaderris aspera</i>	Hazel Pomaderris
<i>Prostanthera lasianthos</i>	Victorian Christmas-bush
<i>Acacia verticillata</i>	Prickly Moses
<i>Cassinia aculeata</i>	Common Cassinia
<i>Coprosma quadrifida</i>	Prickly Currant-bush
<i>Cyathea australis</i>	Rough Tree-fern
<i>Goodenia ovata</i>	Hop Goodenia
<i>Lepidosperma elatius</i>	Tall Sword-sedge
<i>Olearia lirata</i>	Snow Daisy-bush
<i>Pimelea axiflora</i>	Bootlace Bush
<i>Clematis aristata</i>	Mountain Clematis
<i>Pandorea pandorana</i> ssp. <i>pandorana</i>	Wonga Vine
<i>Rubus parvifolius</i>	Small-leaf Bramble

Lower Storey

<i>Acaena novae-zelandiae</i>	Bidgee-widgee
<i>Blechnum nudum</i>	Fishbone Water-fern
<i>Calochlaena dubia</i>	Common Ground-fern
<i>Dianella tasmanica</i>	Tasman Flax-lily
<i>Geranium potentilloides</i>	Soft Cranesbill
<i>Gonocarpus humilis</i>	Shade Raspwort
<i>Hydrocotyle hirta</i>	Hairy Pennywort
<i>Poa ensiformis</i>	Sword Tussock-grass
<i>Pteridium esculentum</i>	Austral Bracken
<i>Pterostylis alpina</i>	Alpine Greenhood
<i>Tetrarrhena juncea</i>	Forest Wire-grass
<i>Viola hederacea</i>	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.