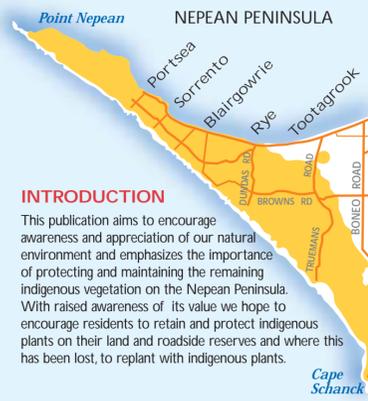


Guide to  
**INDIGENOUS PLANTS**  
& PROBLEM WEEDS  
of the Nepean Peninsula

# Guide to INDIGENOUS PLANTS of the Nepean Peninsula



**INTRODUCTION**

This publication aims to encourage awareness and appreciation of our natural environment and emphasizes the importance of protecting and maintaining the remaining indigenous vegetation on the Nepean Peninsula. With raised awareness of its value we hope to encourage residents to retain and protect indigenous plants on their land and roadside reserves and where this has been lost, to replant with indigenous plants.

Recognition of these plants and the major weed species is a necessary first step in the preservation and restoration of this environment. To assist in identification a brief description of our plants and the major weed species is shown under the images.

**Soils of the Nepean Peninsula**

Soils on the southern end of the Mornington Peninsula as shown on the map in yellow, are composed of dry calcareous sand. The natural vegetation is therefore highly lime tolerant. The plants have also adapted to withstand the harsh coastal environment and low levels of moisture.

**Coastal Moonah Woodland**

Much of this unique area is described as Coastal Moonah Woodland and its significance has been recognized by being listed for protection under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988. Since European settlement over 90% of this woodland community has been cleared. Our companion pamphlet "Conserving the Character" emphasises the importance of this natural bushland environment.

**Historical Background**

The Aboriginal people who lived in this area managed the land to suit their hunting and gathering lifestyle and knew the life cycles of the plants and animals. They used fire to encourage new growth of grasses and shrubs and to open up the land for hunting. Apart from seasonal fruits and seeds, a major source of Aboriginal food came from the underground storage organs of plants, which were collected throughout the year.

With the arrival of European industry to the Peninsula in the 1840s, much of the vegetation, largely dominated by Banksias and She-oaks, was destroyed. There was extensive land clearance, the timber being used to fuel the lime burners' kilns or sent to Melbourne for firewood. Pastoral leases were granted and more land was opened up for farming. As a result of this clearing, the Coast Tea-tree, once confined to the coastal fringe, spread inland and is now the dominant species. What now remains of the natural vegetation is being threatened by encroaching development and the invasion of environmental weeds.

**Friends Groups**

Friends groups volunteers are involved with weed removal, planting, seed collection and propagation in the National Park, foreshores, bushland and roadside reserves. Members are available to give talks. Your participation in these activities would be most welcome. See contact details below.

**A MORNINGTON PENINSULA COUNCIL PLANNING PERMIT IS REQUIRED TO REMOVE NATIVE VEGETATION.**

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

Contacts are shown where you can obtain up to date information and be guided to appropriate nurseries.  
Nepean Conservation Group Inc.  
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Stefanie Rennick, Ilma Dunn, Jane Burke  
Viridans Biological Databases.  
(Photos identified by a V in the corner) Any copying or further use of these photos is prohibited. Images are available in their CD rom "Wild Things of Greater Melbourne".  
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**TREES**



**Coast Tea-tree (*Leptospermum laevigatum*)**  
The dominant tree cover. To 8m x 3m. White flowers Sept. to Nov.



**Moonah (*Melaleuca lanceolata*)**  
The second most common tree. Spreading bushy shrub or small tree to 8m x 3m. Old gnarled trees have great character. Creamy white flowers Feb. to Mar.



**Drizzling She-Oak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*)**  
A distinctive tree. Seen as a character tree and as a street tree. Grows to 8m x 3m. Cones on female trees. Yellow/brown very fine flower spikes on male trees.



**Coast Banksia (*Banksia integrifolia*)**  
A great character and specimen tree to 9m x 4m. Large pale yellow flower spikes in Autumn to Spring are attractive to honeyeaters. Hard fruiting cones.



**Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*)**  
A variable woody shrub or small tree to 7m x 3m. May be very spiny or almost spineless. Flower plumes of tiny cream or white stars in Summer, followed by clusters of brown heart shaped capsules. Tolerates semi shade. Attracts and protects birds.



**Wirilda (*Acacia retinodes* var. *uncinifolia*)**  
Small tree to 7m x 2m. Racemes of pale yellow flowers in Spring to Summer. Fast growing but is often short lived.



**Boobialla (*Myoporum insulare*)**  
A fast growing very hardy shrub to small rounded tree to 5m x 3m. Good for screening and windbreak. Leaves thick and smooth. Small white flowers with purple dots in Oct. to Dec. Round purplish fruit.

**SHRUBS**



**Coast Beard-heath (*Leucopogon parviflorus*)**  
The tallest and very common under shrub. Grows to 4m x 3m. Small white flowers in Spring/Summer, followed by white bead-like fruits which attract the birds.



**Thyme Rice Flower (*Pimelia serpyllifolia*)**  
A very wide-spreading plant in the understorey. To 1.5m x .75m. Tiny yellow flowers in Spring/Summer.



**Nepean bushland**



**Coast Pomaderris (*Pomaderris paniculata*)**  
Common along bay coast and widespread. Grows to 2 x 1.5m. Green above, paler green underneath. Flowers small, white/pink Oct. to Nov.



**Sea Box (*Alysicarpus basifolia*)**  
An attractive small shrub to 1.5m x 1m. Leaves firm, rounded, dark green above, paler green underneath. Flowers white in Spring and Summer. Fruits orange/red.



**Common Correa (*Correa reflexa*)**  
A hardy undershrub to 1m x 1m. Yellow/green tubular flowers May to Oct, attractive to honeyeaters.



**White Correa (*Correa alba*)**  
Common along ocean coastline. Grows to 1m x 1m. Thick rounded leaves. White star-like flowers at any time, mostly June to Oct.



**Pale Turpentine Bush (*Beyeria leschenaultii*)**  
A good undershrub to 2m x 1.5m. Most common in from the ocean coast. Pointed leaves to 3cm, dark green above, whitish beneath. Very small yellowish flowers Sept. to Dec.



**Coast Everlasting (*Ozothamnus turbinatus*)**  
A shrub to 1.5m x 1m on ocean cliffs. Green varying to grey foliage. Yellow flowers in crowded heads Feb. to May. Open position. Propagate from cuttings.



**Cushion Bush (*Leucophyta brownii*)**  
A rounded grey/white shrub to 1m x 1m. Common on ocean cliffs. Thin tangled branchlets. An interesting contrasting shrub. Sunny position. Propagate from cuttings.



**Rare Bitter-bush (*Adriana quadripartita*)**  
Dark green bushy shrub to 1.5m x 1.5m. Leaves coarsely toothed. 5-10cm long dark green above, light green beneath. An extremely quick grower, branches frequently break, making an untidy shrub. Seedlings often appear after land has been cleared and disturbed.



**Hedge Wattle (*Acacia paradoxa*)**  
A shrub to 2.5m x 1.5m with fine thorns. Dark green leathery phyllodes 1-3cm. Flowers Aug. to Nov, yellow globular heads. A very prickly tough bush.



**Coast Salt-bush (*Atriplex cinerea*)**  
Hardy, erect grey shrub to 1.5m x 1m. Grows just above high tide mark. Leaves silvery/grey. Flowers red to purplish, male in terminal clusters, female at leaf bases, Aug. to Jan.



**Coast Daisy-bush (*Olearia axillaris*)**  
A soft grey bushy shrub to 1.5m x 1m. Common along ocean cliffs. Open position. Propagate from cuttings.



**Sticky Daisy-bush (*Olearia glutinosa*)**  
A soft bushy shrub to 1.5m x 1m on ocean cliffs. Showy, with daisy like flowers in Spring/Summer. Open position. Benefits from pruning.

**TUFTED PLANTS**



**Small-flower Flax-lily (*Dianella brevicaulis*)**  
Tusocks of long narrow leaves to .75m x .75m. Very small dark blue flowers on much branched fine wiry stems to .5m. Small blue fruits. A useful hardy contrasting plant. Plants can be divided. Self seeds.



**Spiny-headed Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*)**  
Large tussocks to 1m x 1m of long firm grass-like leaves. Flowers mustard yellow in long dense erect branched clusters. Another hardy contrasting plant.



**Knobby Club-rush (*Ficinia nodosa*)**  
A hardy tufted perennial to 1m x 1m with rigid erect round stems. Rounded brown flower heads most of the year. Very good for binding soil. Propagate from seed.



**Coast Sword Sedge (*Lepidosperma gladiatum*)**  
A tufted perennial to 1.5m x 1.5m, with erect rigid stems. Flowers brown and persistent all year. Propagate by division.



**Stiped Wallaby-grass (*Austrodanthonia racemosa*)**  
A tufted narrow leaved perennial grass to .5m x .5m with flower stems to .5m tall.



**Prickly Spear-grass (*Austrostipa stipoides*)**  
A tufted perennial grass to 1m x 1m.



**Tussock Grass (*Poa labillardieri*)**  
A strong growing perennial grass forming a large tussock to .75m x 1m. Flower heads to 1.3m.

**Nepean Conservation Group Inc.**



- Appreciate our natural environment
- Help and prevent further deterioration
- Identify our indigenous plants
- Identify and understand the impact of problem weeds
- Know what plants to grow
- Contact us with your queries
- Be rewarded with results of your efforts



# Guide to INDIGENOUS PLANTS and WEEDS of the Nepean Peninsula

## CLIMBERS AND SCAMBLERS



**Small-leaf Clematis (*Clematis microphylla*)**  
Very hardy climber to 2m. Small creamy/white flowers in Spring followed by masses of silvery billows of fruiting plumes. Readily self seeds.



**Seaberry Saltbush (*Rhagodia candolleana*)**  
A spreading scrambler to 1m x 1.5m. Thin dull green leaves. Little round whitish flowers. Small red fruit in Spring to Autumn, attractive to birds. A very tough understory plant for difficult locations. Needs controlling to prevent overgrowing nearby plants.



**Climbing Lignum (*Muehlenbeckia adpressa*)**  
A low growing twining shrub. Spreads to 1.5m. Tough dark green leaves to 6cm x 5cm. Flowers small pale green in Spring-Summer.



**Silky Guinea Flower (*Hibbertia sericea*)**  
A hardy attractive small plant to 25cm x .5m. Widespread. Flowers best in sun but tolerates semi shade. Showy yellow flowers Sept to Dec. Spread these throughout your planting.



**Austral Storks Bill (*Pelargonium australe*)**  
A small low growing plant to 25cm x .5m with geranium type leaves. Mauve flowers in Summer. Tolerates light shade. A useful hardy small plant for filling odd corners. Self seeds profusely.



**Running Postman (*Kennedia prostrata*)**  
Widespread. Prostrate, spreads to 1.5m. Enjoys sunny banks forming a carpet of scarlet pea flowers on long trailing stems in Spring-Summer. watering will extend life and vigour of plants. Propagate from seed or cuttings.



**Coast or Smaller Fan-flower (*Scaevola albida*)**  
A prostrate, matted perennial to 1m wide. Bears masses of pale blue or white fan shaped flowers in Spring-Summer. Hardy. Benefits from Summer watering. Propagate from cuttings.

## PLANTING

The best time for planting is in Autumn after good rain and while the soil is still warm. Winter and Spring are also favourable times. A dry Spring/Summer would be severe on Spring planting and some Summer watering may be needed.

- Remove weeds prior to planting.
- Water before and after planting.
- Mulch to retain moisture and inhibit weed growth.
- Fertiliser not required.

Plants may be difficult to obtain. Place an order for plants 6 to 8 months prior to planting.

## TREES

**Coast Tea-tree (*Leptospermum laevigatum*)**  
The dominant tree cover. Originally grew along the coastal fringe and took over the open country in the 19th century. In some areas Tea-tree is suffering dieback. Also, in much of this area it has grown close together and with aging the long spindly stems gradually fall over. When planting replacements leave adequate room between plants. Fast growing and hardy. Grows to 8m x 3m. Can be pruned when young. Self sown seedlings to 20 cm. transplant readily. Easily grown from seed.

**Moonah (*Melaleuca lanceolata*)**  
Recommended for new planting and as a replacement for tea-tree. A spreading small tree to 8mx3m. Makes a good screen. Very hardy. Can be pruned at any age. Easily grown from seed.

**Drooping She-Oak (*Allocasuarina verticillata*)**  
Best grown as a street tree or a character tree in an open position without close vegetation. Grows to 8m x 3m. Very hardy. Easily grown from seed.

**Coast Banksia (*Banksia integrifolia*)**  
A great character tree which attracts honey eaters with its pale yellow flower spikes. Grows to 9mx4m. Avoid over exposure to ocean winds. Likes an open sunny position.

## SHRUBS

The most important understory plants are Coast Beard-heath, Thyme Rice Flower, Coast Pomaderris, Sea Box, Common Correa and White Correa.

**Coast Beard-heath (*Leucopogon parviflorus*)**

The tallest and basic under shrub. Grows to 4m x 2m. An essential part of the natural understory. Very hardy. Responds to pruning. A slow grower. Not easily propagated. The seed requires special treatment. Being a slow grower you may prefer to grow it on in a container for another year.

**Thyme Rice Flower (*Pimelia serpyllifolia*)**  
Thyme Rice Flower comes next in the natural cover. Grows to 1.5m x .75m. A tough fill in shrub. In shady spots it benefits from pruning. Seeds freely. If you have land with some natural vegetation you will most likely find it growing there. Plants up to 20cm transplant readily. Nurseries have had great difficulty with its propagation. Female plants develop seed in small white balls 3mm in diameter in November/December. Perhaps you could make seed available to nurseries to encourage their trials.

**Sea Box (*Alyxia buxifolia*)**  
An attractive small shrub to 1.5m x 1m. A tough reliable shrub in full sun or semi shade. Benefits from pruning. A slow grower. You may care to give a first year plant another year in a container. If grown from cuttings they are slow to strike and results are uncertain.

**Coast Pomaderris (*Pomaderris paniculosa*)**  
A useful hardy shrub to 2m x 1.5m. Tolerates an exposed position to semi shade. Makes an effective screen. Not easy to propagate.

**Common Correa (*Correa reflexa*)**

A valuable habitat plant which is attractive to birds and insects. A hardy shrub to 1m x 1m. Has tubular flowers May to October. Benefits from pruning. Grows readily from cuttings.

**White Correa (*Correa alba*)**  
Hardy in all situations and an excellent cover for exposed banks. Grows to 1m x 1m. White star like flowers at any time mostly June to Oct. Propagate from cuttings or from layering.



**Bower Spinach (*Tetragonia implexicoma*)**  
Widespread. Very strong grower with long trailing stems to 4m and broad soft dark green leaves. Grows along the ground and over shrubs. Needs cutting back to prevent it smothering other plants.



**Karkalla (*Carpobrotus rossii*)**  
A robust spreading succulent plant of the pigface family on open sand dunes. Prostrate, spreading to 1.5m. Light purple flowers in Spring/Summer.



**Austral Trefoil (*Lotus australis*)**  
A sprawling herb 10cm x 20cm. Flowers Sep. to Nov.



**Blue Bottle-daisy (*Lagenofera stipitata*)**  
A perennial herb. Basal rosette to 10cm of large lobed leaves. White daisy-like flowers on erect leafless stems to 15cm.



A Bushland Garden 2 years old



**Bush Pea (*Pultenaea tenuifolia*)**  
Low small shrub to .25m x .5m on dry open sandy banks. Yellow/brown pea flowers Sept/Oct



**Coast Twin-leaf (*Zygophyllum billardieri*)**  
A scrambling ground cover to 10cm x 1m. Dark yellow flowers. Usually flowering.



**Kidney Weed (*Dichondra repens*)**  
Common mat-like creeping plant spreading to 1m. Kidney shaped leaves resemble those of violets but thicker. Usually under trees.



**Pink Fairies (*Caladenia latifolia*)**  
An orchid with stems to 20cm and pink flowers in Sep-Oct. Grows under Tea-tree or Coast Beard-heath.



**Coast Swainson Pea (*Swainsona lessertifolia*)**  
A spreading herb 20cm x .5m with racemes of purple flowers in Spring. Enjoys filtered sun.



**Leafy Greenhood (*Pterostylis cucullata*)**  
An orchid with basal leaves. Large hood on stem reaching to between 3cm to 8cm. Flowers Sep-Oct. Grows under Tea-tree or Coast Beard-heath.

## WEEDS



**Polygala or Myrtle-leaf Milkwort (*Polygala myrtifolia*)**  
This widespread weed has overwhelmed much of our indigenous vegetation. Forms tangle thickets. Grows to 2m. Purple pea flowers in Autumn and Winter. Pull out young plants. Cut roots of older plants with a spade to enable removal. Regeneration of seedlings will need to be eradicated by pulling or spraying.



**Smilax or Bridal Creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*)**  
This widespread weed has seriously infested the area. Forms clumps of tubers. Bears purple or white flowers in Spring. Dries off. Dig out all tubers in a clump with a fork or spray by spring. Repeat treatment will be required.



**Dolichos Pea (*Dipogon lignosus*)**  
A strong growing creeper which swamps the foliage of shrubs and trees. Bears purple or white flowers in Spring. Dig out plants with a spade. Roots broken or cut near the surface sprout readily.



**Cape Ivy (*Delairea odorata*)**  
Another strong growing creeper which swamps other vegetation. Masses of yellow flower heads in Winter. Brittle stems. Remove with a fork.



**Italian Buckthorn (*Rhamnus alaternus*)**  
Tall bush or small tree to 5m. Dark green leaves with serrated edges. Numerous dark red berries in summer attract birds which spread the seeds extensively. Pull young plants with the help of a spade. If necessary. Main stems of larger plants can be dug out or cut and painted with herbicide.



**Boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*)**  
Large tough spiny tangled shrub to 4m. White flowers Oct. to Mar. are followed by smooth orange/red fruits. Removal and burning of the spiny branches is the best attack. Main stem may be cut and painted with herbicide.



**Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*)**  
Large bush to bushy tree to 5m. Shiny dark green leaves paler beneath. Flowers creamy/white in spring. Fruit round, green becoming orange in Autumn/Winter. Pull or dig out small plants. Stems of older plants can be cut and painted with herbicide.



**Mirror Bush (*Coprosma repens*)**  
Large shrub to bushy tree to 5m. Distinctly shiny thick dark green leaves. Greenish flowers in Spring/Summer. Orange fruit in Summer/Autumn. Pull or dig out small plants. Cut and paint stems of older plants.



**Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster species*)**  
Attractive garden shrub to 3m. Clusters of red berries in late Summer/Autumn attract the birds causing widespread infestation. Remove plants using a spade to cut roots or stems of older plants can be cut and painted with herbicide.



**Boneseed (*Chrysanthemoides monillifera*)**  
Grows to 2m. Dull green leaves. 5 to 7cm long with irregularly serrated edges. Clusters of bright yellow open petalled flowers July to Oct. Young plants pull easily. Use a spade to cut roots of older plants.



**Agapanthus (*Agapanthus praecox ssp. orientalis*)**  
Straplike leaves from base to 1/2 m. Blue or white flowers in large round cluster on stalks to 1m. in Summer. Bears masses of seeds in late Summer/Autumn. Dig out any time before seeding.



**English Ivy (*Hedera helix*)**  
A tough spreading creeper/climber forming a dense mat smothering other plants. Remove all growth. Cut main stems climbing trees. Dig out roots or cut and paint thick stems. Follow up essential.



**Bluebell Creeper (*Sallya heterophylla*)**  
A thin stemmed scrambler. Blue flowers in Spring/Summer. Pull/dig out.



**Blue Periwinkle (*Vinca major*)**  
Ground cover plant which grows densely as its trailing stems root as they touch the soil. Blue flowers in Spring/Pull, digging out the roots. Spray regrowth with herbicide.

## ROAD RESERVES

The road reserves are essential in maintaining the quality of the natural environment which has made this area so highly desirable for residents and tourists. They not only provide a screen hiding the increasing threat of urban building but also enhance dwelling privacy and provide a buffer against noise, dust and visual pollution.

They act as a link between other areas of vegetation by creating a wildlife corridor for the movement and shelter of birds and animals, whilst providing a valuable wildlife habitat in our increasingly urbanized environment.

However, weed invasion, trampling and other human disturbance endanger the reserves. It is important that we respect the value of these reserves and do not use them as convenient places to discard weeds or dump other rubbish. For their own benefit landholders should be encouraged to maintain the quality of these reserves. Road reserves contribute to the nature and character of the Nepean Peninsula and should be seen as valuable assets.

## NURSERIES

Some plants are difficult to propagate and may not always be available. Under FURTHER INFORMATION contacts are shown where you can obtain up to date information and be guided to appropriate nurseries.



Dolichos Pea and Cape Ivy

## WEEDS

A major threat to our natural vegetation is weed invasion. The inflammability and bulk of many weed species also substantially increases the fire risk. Recognition and prompt removal of woody weeds and introduced grasses is very important in minimising their impact.

The widespread Polygala has taken over much of our understory. Smilax, Dolichos Pea and Cape Ivy are smothering our indigenous plants.

Many ornamental plants have escaped from our parks and gardens and invaded our bushland.

Environmental weeds have the ability to reproduce and spread rapidly, often taking over and changing the nature of the vegetation. Loss of our natural species frequently threatens the existence of our birds and animals.

This pamphlet aims to enable weed identification and give guidance regarding their removal. Remove or spray weeds before they seed, felling which, place seed heads in bags and dispose of safely in a bin.

Weeds should not be composted or used as mulch. Weed seeds are usually viable for more than one season so follow up with seedling removal.

Do not hesitate to contact us regarding any queries.