

# A Guide to Koorloo Walk Trail



## Welcome to the Koorloo Walk Trail

In the language of the local Nyoongar people Koorloo is the Native Wisteria, *Hardenbergia comptoniana*. The Koorloo walk trail is the longest of the three trails in the Banksia Woodland at 1.2km, circumnavigating the entire Banksia Woodland and showcasing a broad range of environmental states.

The trail can be enjoyed as a self-guided walk or by joining one of the occasional guided walks by the Murdoch branch of the Wildflower Society. Come learn about the intricacies of the Banksia Woodland, the environmental factors which have affected it, and the conservation management being undertaken to protect and restore this special area.

This reserve is precious. Please help us protect this area from the spread of dieback and other plant diseases by staying on the paths and ensuring your footwear is clean before entering. Consider cleaning your shoes before leaving home with a brush or spraying with methylated spirits. Take only photographs; leave only footprints.



*Hardenbergia comptoniana* or native wisteria in full flower

## History of the Banksia Woodland Reserve

The lands now used for Murdoch University, Beelair Regional Park and the Banksia Woodland were first used by Nyoongar Whadjuk people to move between the freshwater lakes and wetlands. Here they hunted and gathered a huge diversity of plants and animals to be used for food, medicine, shelter, tools and utensils. More recently, much of this region was used for grazing horses, cattle and sheep, and was planted with pine trees (*Pinus pinaster*) for timber.

The Banksia Woodland is unique in the region because it was logged for native timber (jarrah and marri), and used for grazing, but it was never part of the pine plantations. Therefore, the reserve has retained much of its precious soil structure and native plant diversity. A remnant of the old post and wire fence still stands near the Poolgarla walk trail's northern side. The walk trails were constructed by Murdoch University in 1994 and the University conducts ongoing significant environmental restoration projects to protect the Woodland's biodiversity values.



*Pine plantation in the early 1950s – South Street is the curved road at the top right hand corner. Chelodina Wetland, now at the centre of Murdoch University's Campus, is centred in the photo, the edge of North Lake can be seen on the top left hand corner.*

## Location

The Banksia Woodland reserve is located at Murdoch University's Murdoch campus. Access any of the three walk trails through the Banksia Woodland reserve from Campus Drive, which comes off Farrington Road. An informal parking area is available off Campus Drive adjacent to the Somerville Baptist College, but please do not park in the College's grounds or on vegetation (see adjoining map).

## Acknowledgments

Murdoch University stands on Whadjuk Nyoongar land. The University manages the Banksia Woodland reserve in conjunction with the Murdoch Environmental Restoration Group (MERG) as part of the Beelair Regional Park. These information leaflets, and the interpretive signage along the Koorloo walk trail, were developed with Environmental Community Grant funding from the Department of Environment and Conservation. Photos supplied by Keith Lightbody, Leah Knapp, Neil Goldsborough, Tony Kirkby and Jiri Lochman.

## Climate Watch

The Banksia Woodland is a Climate Watch trail. Record your observations about selected flora and animals on the Climate Watch app, and help scientists understand how climate change is impacting on biodiversity all over Australia.

Species of interest to Climate Watch are indicated on these brochures with a green and white dotted circle logo.



## Introduced Species – Unwanted Competition

Introduced species are a major threat to the biodiversity in the Banksia Woodland as they compete with native species for habitat.

Weeds, such as Gladioli and Veldt Grass are found throughout the woodland. They are far more prevalent in previously cleared areas, such as the trails, farm boundary and areas previously burnt by bushfires, where they are able to establish faster than native species.

Introduced pest animals such as foxes and rabbits can be hard to spot as they are active mainly after dark. Keep an eye out for signs of where they have been, such as the scats (poo) and diggings where rabbits have been feeding recently. Foxes and feral cats prey on native animals such as Quendas, so pet cats should be spayed, wear a bell, and be brought in at night.



Gladioli  
*Gladiolus caryophyllaceus*



Veldt Grass  
*Ehrharta calycina*



Feral cat

## Restoration – What's Being Done

Various activities are undertaken by Murdoch University, Murdoch Environmental Restoration Group (MERG) and other volunteers to conserve this beautiful woodland.

Targeted revegetation projects have been undertaken, particularly along the farm boundary. Here you may see and recognise many different native seedlings growing on either side of the trail. These will eventually help to reduce the infiltration of weeds into the woodland, as well as providing a quality habitat and food source for native species such as the Quenda and the Carnaby's Black Cockatoo.

To make these revegetation projects possible, extensive weed control measures were conducted prior to planting. Weed control is an ongoing process throughout the year.



MERG Restoration Day



Seedlings in woodland after planting

## Dieback – The Silent Killer

Dieback is a plant pathogen that is thought to have been introduced to Australia around the time of European settlement.

It is a soil-borne water mould that attacks the roots of plants, taking the nutrients that the plants require to survive. It is widespread throughout the Swan Coastal Plain – a major problem for Banksias as they are particularly susceptible to it.

The Banksia Woodland reserve is particularly susceptible to dieback, so it is important to prevent dieback infestation. We thank you for helping us to protect against the spread of the water mould into the Banksia Woodland by cleaning your shoes before entering and staying on the walk trails.



Subterranean killer: Dieback attacks plants through their roots.



Killed by Dieback: Candle Banksia (*Banksia attenuata*)

## Fire – Not Always a Good Thing

Fire is a naturally occurring phenomenon in the hot, dry summers of the Perth region. It has an integral role in the reproductive cycles of many species of Australian flora, such as Banksias, which release their seeds after the event of a fire.

But not all species will benefit. If fires occur too frequently, some species are not able to reproduce quick enough or recover adequately to survive another fire. The woodland ecosystem therefore may be unable to fully recover from the disturbance and weeds can take over.

In 2010 a fire occurred in a section of the Banksia Woodland (marked on the map). Notice the difference in the structure and composition of flora between burnt and unburnt areas.



Banksia cone after seeds have been released



Fire affected area in woodland

## Seasonal Changes – What's in Bloom

**Summer:** *Eucalyptus calophylla* (Marri or red gum) is one of the few plants that flowers in the Banksia Woodland in summer. Its flowering season usually commences around February.

**Autumn:** *Brachyloma priessii* (globe heath), starts flowering around March, and will continue to flower until September.

**Winter:** *Hardenbergia comptoniana* (native wisteria), which this walk is named after, starts flowering in mid July with beautiful cascades of purple pea flowers.

**Spring:** *Drosera stolonifera* (leafy sundew), flowers around September to October. This genus is endemic to, or only found in, Western Australia. It is a carnivorous plant that uses sticky hairs to catch insects.



*Eucalyptus calophylla*



*Brachyloma priessii*



*Hardenbergia comptoniana*



*Drosera stolonifera*



Bat box



Southern Brown Bandicoot (*Isodon obesulus fusciventer*)  
Nyoongar name: Quenda