

Shire of Yarra Ranges Plant Directories

The Shire of Yarra Ranges covers an area of approximately 2,500 square kilometres, one of the largest in Victoria. It incorporates densely populated areas, smaller villages, a large rural sector and large proportion of forests. It is committed to caring for and maintaining the bushland reserves and road verges under its control and encouraging the residents to care for any bush remnants that occur on their property.

To encourage residents to recognise and understand their local plants, the Manager of Asset Maintenance and Services, Grant Jack, asked me to prepare a book on our local plants. With around 900 species of vascular plants in the Shire this was going to be a pretty big book. As a response it was decided that the book would become a series of fact sheets about each plant with photos to assist identification, published on the Shire's website in a special directory. Three other Directories complement this information.

The Local Plant Directory was completed in December 2008 and is available on the Shire's web page, or by going directly to www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/plants. As well as a description of each plant and photos for most, the directory features information on plant communities within the Shire, usefulness, growing information, conservation status and known commercial availability of the plants within the Shire with a link to nurseries where these may be obtained. It is written in easy to read text.

The Plant Communities Directory describes the 44 plant communities used by the Shire. These are not as inclusive as the Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC's) used by the Department of Sustainability and the Environment. Each Community contains a description, a full list of species and a list of generally available and reliable plants.

The Street Tree Directory has been put together by the Tree Department at the Shire and includes a list of suitable Australian and exotic trees for local streets. It not only describes each tree but includes information on topics such as their potential for causing damage to drains, interfering with overhead powerlines and potential for failure in high winds.

The final Directory has just become available. The Weed Directory currently features the worst 50 weeds in the Shire. Information covers each weed's status, treatment, dispersal, similarity to other species, to avoid confusion with indigenous or other exotic species, and indigenous or Australian replacement plants as well as a description and photos. There will be links related fact sheets produced by the Environment Department. These are expected to be loaded soon. This will be an ongoing project.

These directories are a resource for local residents, students, Friends and Landcare groups within the Shire and is freely available to all interested people.

Marilyn Gray