

## How can we help bushland?

1. Learn about native plants and animals. The more you know, the more you notice.
2. Explore the bush. The more you see, the more you will care.
3. Stay on the track so you don't squash plants.
4. Only ride bikes, trail bikes and horses in places where this is allowed, as they cause erosion and spread weeds.
5. Don't take any plants or animals. Leave them in their homes.
6. Don't let dogs and cats go in the bush. Give your cat a collar with bells and keep cats inside at night.
7. Protect and plant local native vegetation in your garden.
8. Leave a wild corner in your garden with rocks, branches and native plants to provide habitat for birds, lizards and other native animals.
9. Learn about native plants and weeds by joining a local bushcare group. Weeds often spread into bush near houses or roads. If you live near the bush, learn which plants are weeds and how to remove them.



### Acknowledgements

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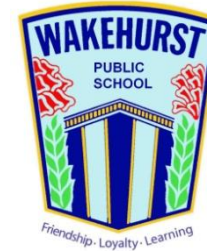
available at [www.ozemail.com.au/~ssgap/coastal.htm](http://www.ozemail.com.au/~ssgap/coastal.htm),

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2008



## Duffys Forest Plants at Wakehurst Public School



Name: .....

## Introduction

Before European settlers arrived, plants covered all the land around Sydney. Over a long, long time, each type of plant had evolved to be able to live in a particular sort of place. Different places have different rock, soil, water, sunlight, wind, slope, fire and animals. All of these are important for a plant.

Plants that live in the same sort of environment are known as a plant *community*. The bushland found at the front of our school, and in the back corner, is part of the *Duffys Forest Ecological Community*. This particular community only ever grew in patches across the northern beaches where there was just the right environment: ridges or nearby slopes with a richer, ironstone soil. Most Duffys Forest bushland grew in Frenchs Forest, Belrose, Terrey Hills and Duffys Forest.

Unfortunately, most of Duffys Forest has been cleared for roads, farming and houses. So little is left that it is called an *Endangered Ecological Community*. And of course, as the bushland disappears, so do all the many creatures that live in it.

Around 2,500 different plants grow in Sydney's many varied environments, more than in most other places in the world. Our two little pieces of bushland are only about 550 square metres in area, yet there are 87 different native plants.

In this booklet you will learn about plants that are growing in our school, most of them in our bushland. You will learn about three or four new plants each year – usually one tree, one shrub and one grass or groundcover. These types of plants form three layers, each giving food or shelter to many other plants or animals. All these living things are linked together by the countless ways they depend on each other. This is known as an ecosystem, or the web of life.

Please look and touch carefully whenever you are in the bush and you will find wonderful things.

*Let Nature be your Teacher.*  
William Wordsworth

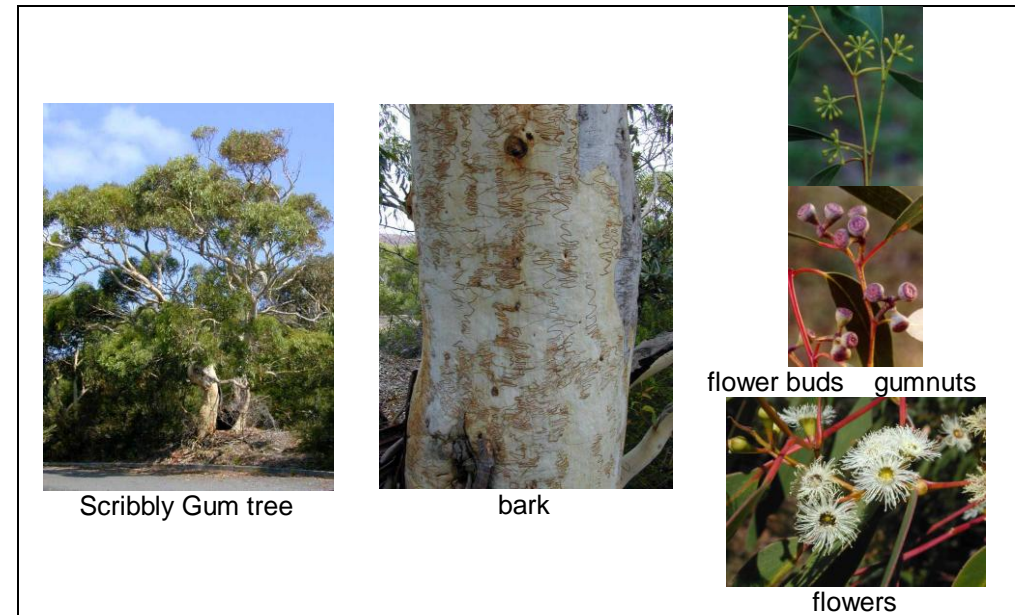


## How many plants do you know?

### Duffys Forest Plants at Wakehurst Public School

Grade	Tree	Small tree / Shrub	Grasses / Groundcovers
K	Scribbly Gum	Christmas Bush	Kangaroo Grass
1	Red Bloodwood	Wattles	Blue Flax Lily
2	Old Man Banksia	Banksias	Native Violet
3	Turpentine	Grass Tree	Lomandra
4	i) Paperbark ii) Brown Stringybark	Geebung	Native Sarsaparilla
5	i) Black She-Oak ii) Blueberry Ash	Hakeas	Silvertop Wallaby Grass
6	Sydney Red Gum	Pittosporum	i) Weeping Meadow Grass ii) Right Angle Grass

Scribbly Gum, *Eucalyptus haemastoma*



**Flowers:** September to December

**Fruit:** When the flower bud first grows, it is green and is covered by a tiny cap. The cap falls off as the flower turns into a woody nut. Have you seen pictures of gumnut babies wearing little hats like this?

**Who scribbled on it?** The scribbles on its bark are tunnels made by the caterpillars of the Scribbly Gum Moth (*Ogmograptis scribula*). The moths lay eggs between the layers of old and new bark.

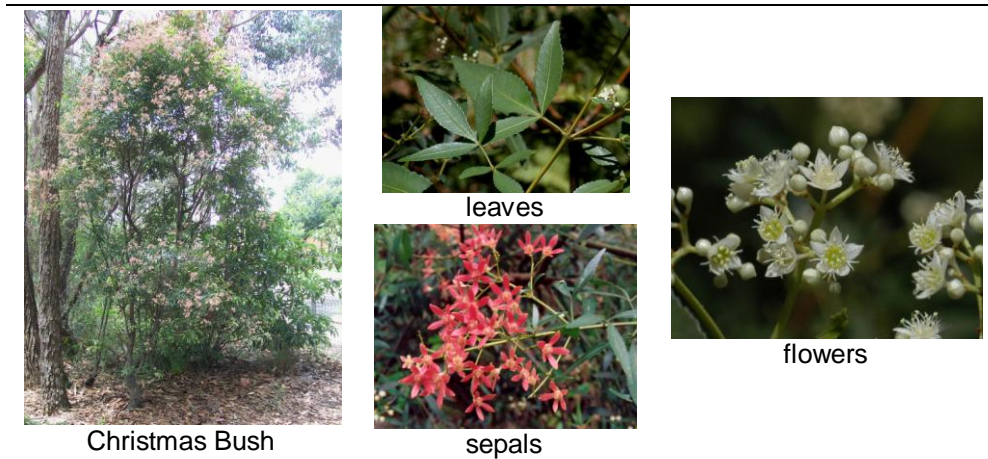
**Who eats here?** The caterpillars burrow into the new bark and munch as they wiggle. When the old bark falls away, we can see their trails. The ends of the tracks show where the caterpillars turned into pupae, before coming out as moths.

**To do:** Find the buds when they are young and green. Look at the caps. Find some brown gumnuts and leave in the sun to open. Then the brown or black seeds will come out.

Trace some scribbles with your finger. Copy some here.

## Kindergarten

### Christmas Bush, *Ceratopetalum gummiferum*



**Flowers:** The white flowers bloom in spring and turn bright red around Christmas.

**Fruit:** In summer, the flower turns into a small, woody nut.

**Who eats here?** Native flies and bees come to eat the pollen.

**To do:** Look at some different flowers. Find the **petals**. Find the **pollen** on the long **stamens**. Look at the bottom of the flower and find the **sepals** – these are usually green and look like little leaves. Many Australian flowers have very small petals. The Christmas Bush has little white flowers, then the **sepals** grow much larger and turn red, just in time for Christmas.

Mark on the calendar when the white flowers come and when the **sepals** turn red. How many days till Christmas?

## Year 6

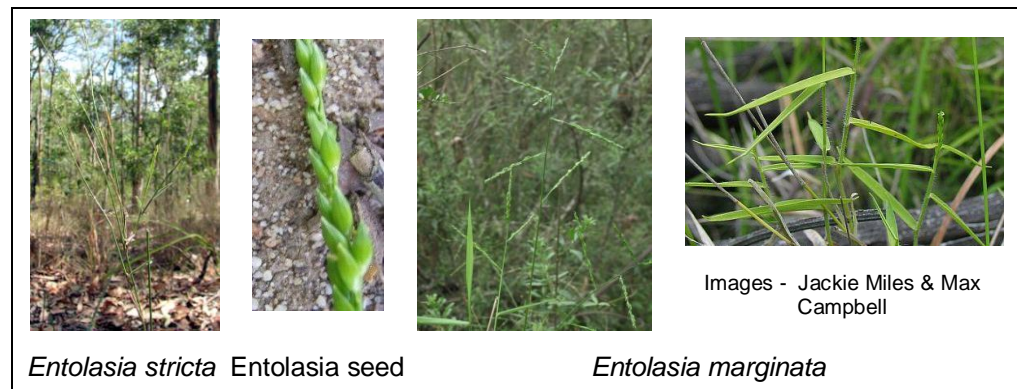
### Weeping Meadow Grass, *Microlaena stipoides*



*Microlaena* is the most common native grass in our school bushland. 'Weeping' means 'drooping branches', not 'crying'. It describes the way this slender, long grass bends over. The seeds ripen from December till April.

Grasses do not have large or colourful flowers because they do not need to attract insects or animals for pollination. Instead, they are wind pollinated.

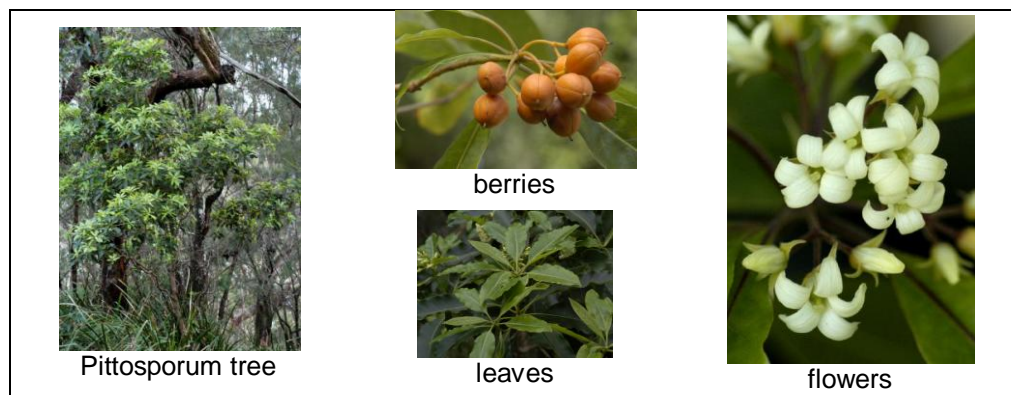
### Right Angle Grass, *Entolasia stricta* and *Entolasia marginata*



This grass is known as Right Angle Grass because the leaves come out at an angle approaching a right angle. *Entolasia stricta* is a wiry grass with shorter, narrower and rougher leaves than *Entolasia marginata* whose leaves are longer, broader and flatter.

## Year 6

### Sweet Pittosporum, *Pittosporum undulatum*



**Flowers:** white, very fragrant flowers, spring and early summer

**Fruit:** green fruits turn orange with shiny, black seeds

This Pittosporum species is named 'undulatum' because its soft leaves have a wavy edge and the Latin word, 'unda', means 'wave'. 'Sclerophyll' comes from two Ancient Greek words meaning 'hard leaves'. Except in rainforests, most Australian plants have hard leaves to reduce moisture loss. Though Pittosporum seeds grow quickly in dry, sclerophyll forests, the tree is killed by fire. So in the past it only survived in moist gullies or rainforests. Now that bush near houses is not burnt, Pittosporum is becoming too common in Sydney's urban bushland. It forms a dense canopy and other native plants do not germinate in its shade. Bush regenerators remove some to help keep the biodiversity.

**Aboriginal Use:** Native bees produce a dark honey from the nectar.

**Who eats here?** Night moths sip on the nectar. The fruits are eaten by birds such as the Pied Currawong and King Parrot, as well as marsupials such as the Ring Tail Possum and Flying Fox. The seeds are spread in their droppings.

**To do:** How many Pittosporums can you find at school? Look for them in some other bushland near houses.

## Kindergarten

### Kindergarten - Kangaroo Grass, *Themeda australis*



**Flowers:** Grasses have many, very small flowers. Kangaroo grass flowers in summer.

**Fruit:** The seed for Kangaroo Grass is spear-shaped with a black, wiry stem at the top and barbed spikes at the base to help the seed burrow into the soil.

**Who eats here?** Kangaroo Grass is found all over Australia. Seed-eating birds such as parrots and cockatoos eat grass seeds. Kangaroos and wallabies eat the grass. Beetles feed on the tiny seeds. The thick clumps of leaves keep the soil moist so that many living things can grow in the soil. Then animals like bandicoots can hide under the leaves and dig for creatures such as beetles. Grass roots help keep the soil from washing or blowing away.

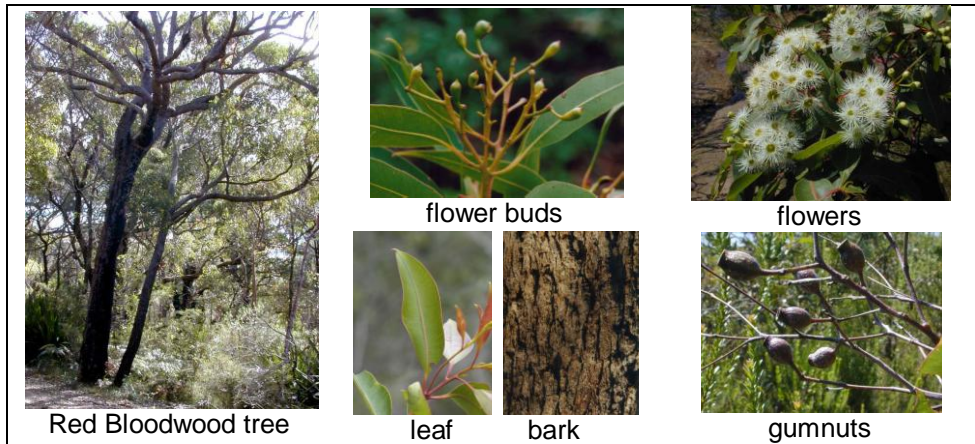
**To do:** Look at the flowers and seeds of different grasses with a magnifying glass.

Collect some Kangaroo Grass seed in December. Put the barbed end in soil so they stand up. Spray with water and you will see the black top start twisting round to help the seed burrow into the soil.

Make a collage using real grass and soil, and pictures of all the creatures that might eat there.

## Year 1

### Red Bloodwood, *Corymbia gummifera*



**Flowers:** January to April

**Fruit:** For us fruit means something yummy to eat. But for Nature fruits are just a way to keep seeds safe and give them the best chance to grow. Many Australian plants have hard, woody fruits so the seeds can live through a bushfire. Gumnuts are the fruits that keep the seeds safe. These gumnuts are shaped like a tiny vase.

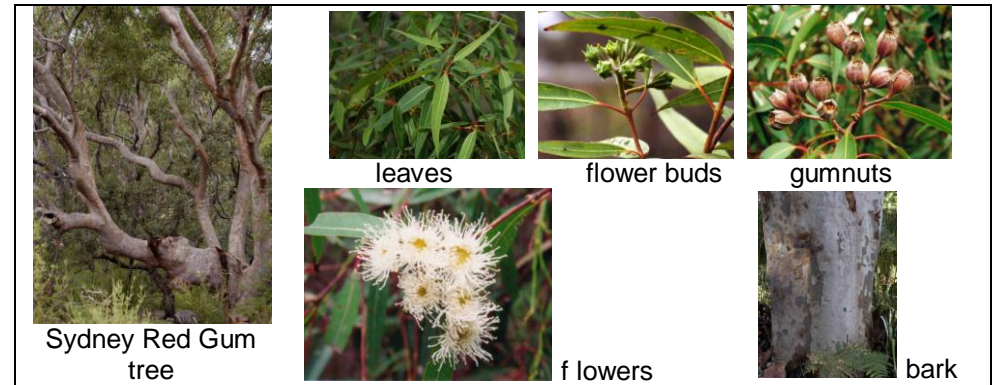
Bloodwoods have rough, scaly bark all over, except on the smallest twigs. The Red Bloodwood gets its name from the red sap which comes out when the bark is damaged, often by insect larvae. Sap carries food around the tree.

**Who eats here?** Insect larvae eat the sap, so birds, other insects, spiders and lizards come to eat the larvae. Sugar Gliders also like to eat the sap and there are scratchings high on our trees which show that we have hungry night visitors.

**To do:** Look on the ground around the tree to find some of the gumnuts. Are the seeds still inside?  
What could you make with a gumnut? Draw one.

## Year 6

### Sydney Red Gum, *Angophora costata*



**Flowers:** November to January

**Fruit:** ribbed woody fruit

This tall, beautiful tree grows on sandstone soils around Sydney. The new bark is pink or orange, which darkens as it ages. There are little dips like dimples in the bark.

Angophoras are closely related to Eucalypts. All Eucalypts have a cap on the flower bud, but Angophoras do not. Whereas Angophora leaves are opposite each other on the stem, the leaves grow alternately on Eucalypts. Eucalypt fruits are smooth, but there are raised ribs on the fruit of the Angophora.

**Aboriginal use:** The limbs are often very twisted and bumps form where they fall off. Aboriginal people used to cut off those bumps, or burls, and hollow them out as containers for food and water.

**Who eats here?** The hollows of old trees can be home for many creatures such as possums, snakes, lizards and birds.

**To do:** Find some fruit and twigs with the leaves still attached. See how the leaves are opposite each other. Feel the ribs on the fruit. Watch to find out when the bark falls. Usually it is at the end of spring. Paint the many different colours and patterns you can see when the new and old bark are both still on the tree. Give the tree a hug and feel its bumps!

## Year 5

### Native Grasses

While the introduced grasses used for lawns need regular watering, native grasses have evolved to survive in Australia's extreme climate with its drought and fire. Although the leaves will die, new shoots will grow when it rains. Both gardeners and farmers are beginning to use native grasses as they do not need extra water and fertiliser.

**Who eats here?** Wallabies and other grazing animals such as Bettongs eat the leaves of native grasses. The seeds are eaten by birds such as Rosellas, parrots and cockatoos. The long leaves provide protection for invertebrates, ground birds, reptiles and small marsupials.

**To do:** Collect the flowers and seeds of different grasses, both native and introduced. Look at them with a hand lens. Make a display, labelling those you can. However, do not take seeds from the grasses in Duffys Forest, only from other school areas.

### Silvertop Wallaby Grass, *Joycea pallida*

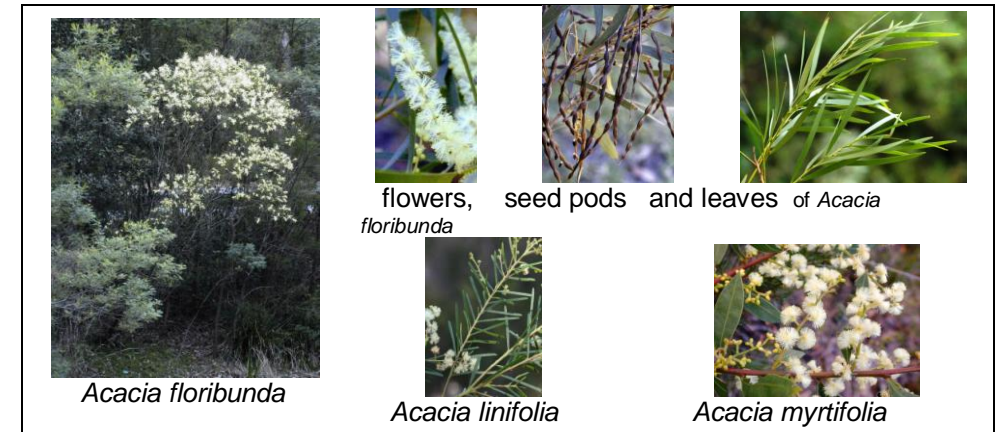


When Silvertop Wallaby Grass isn't flowering, you wouldn't particularly notice it. While we notice trees and shrubs, we generally overlook grasses. Yet, tucked away in our bushland are clumps of Silvertop Wallaby Grass which is listed as a threatened plant in Northern Sydney. Once common, it has been cleared so much that its survival in Northern Sydney is now threatened. A local native nursery has collected seed from our plants to grow more.

## Year 1

### Wattles, *Acacias*

Some of our school wattles are *Acacia myrtifolia*, *Acacia floribunda*, *Acacia linifolia*, *Acacia fimbriata* and *Acacia elata*.



**Flowers:** Different wattles flower at different times of year.

**Fruit:** Seeds are in a pod, like peas and beans.

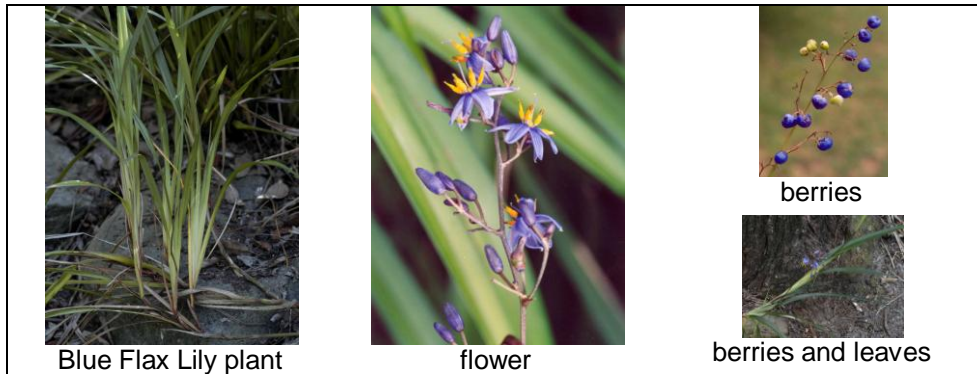
There are more than 900 different sorts of Acacias or wattles in Australia. Acacias are easy to spot as they have very small yellow flowers. Many flowers are joined together in balls or rods. The petals and sepals are so small that you can hardly see them. The stamens are the part you notice most – that's where the pollen is. What look like the leaves on most wattles are actually flattened leaf stalks.

**Who eats here?** There is a white, soft cap at the top of wattle seeds. Ants carry the seeds back to their nests to eat this part and then leave the seeds underground. The hard outside of the seed is scratched as it is dragged through the dirt. These scratches let water in when it rains. In a hot fire, the seeds in pods on a wattle may be killed, but the ones stored underground in ants' nests are safe.

**To do:** Watch the flowers turn into seed pods. When they are ready, they will split open and you can see the seeds. To sprout wattle seeds, scratch them with a nail file or fine sandpaper and then soak them in warm water. Plant your seeds and watch them grow.

## Year 1

### Blue Flax Lily, *Dianella caerulea*



**Flowers:** blue, star-shaped flowers in spring

**Fruit:** blue berries with shiny, black seeds in early summer

**Aboriginal use:** The berries of most types of *Dianella* are edible, including those of *Dianella caerulea*. The leaves make a strong string.

**Who eats here?** Insects eat the nectar in the flowers and birds such as Lorriakeets and Pied Currawongs eat the berries and then spread the seeds in their droppings. Lizards also like them.

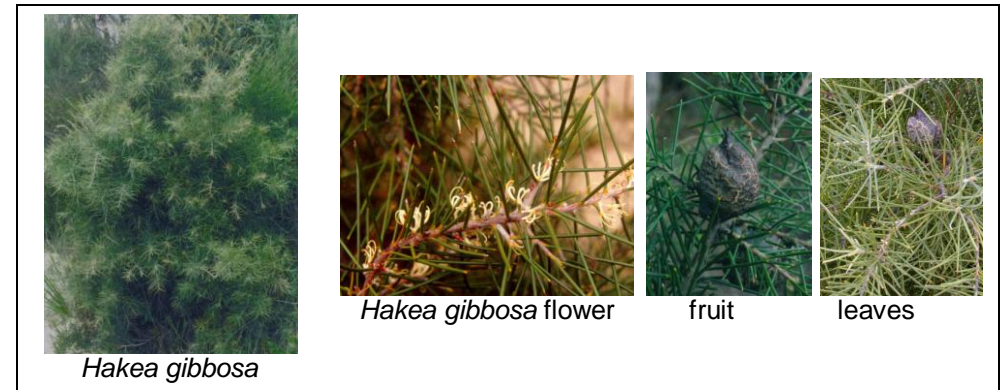
**To do:** Watch for the berries growing in November and with your teacher, pick just one each to eat when they are bright blue. Never eat bush foods unless an adult like your parent or a teacher says you can, as many are poisonous. Do not pick all the berries from a plant, as they contain the seeds for more plants to grow.

Draw some *Dianella* plants.

## Year 5

### *Hakea gibbosa*

also at school: *Hakea dactyloides*, *Hakea salicifolia*



**Flowers:** cream flowers, winter and spring

**Fruit:** hard, woody fruits with a deeply wrinkled surface and two points

It takes a lot of energy for a plant to make such large fruits to house just two seeds. Why would it be worth this much effort?

Hakeas' tough fruits remain tightly closed unless there is a fire or the plant dies. Each pod contains two seeds with papery wings shaped like sails so they are carried by the wind. Most Hakea species have a woody swelling called a lignotuber at or below ground level. If the plant is burnt, it will shoot again from this lignotuber. Like many natives, Hakea leaves are very small and hairy to reduce water loss.

**Who eats here?** Hakeas' sweet-smelling flowers attract honey-eating birds, beetles, moths, bees, ants, and even small marsupials. The sharp leaves offer protection to small birds. Who might they need protection from?

**To do:** Draw the Hakea fruit.



## Year 5

### Blueberry Ash, *Elaeocarpus reticulatus*



**Flowers:** white, sometimes pink, flowers in spring

**Fruit:** blue berries

The tallest trees in a forest are called the canopy trees as they provide a canopy of shade. The plants growing below form the understorey. Blueberry Ash is a small, understorey tree growing in moister, sheltered places such as in Duffys Forest or gullies. Plants growing in moist, shady conditions have much bigger, softer, darker green leaves than those growing in bright, drying sunlight. Rainforest leaves often have a pointy end known as the 'drip tip' to direct water off the leaf.

**Who eats here?** The berries are a favourite food for cockatoos, Pied Currawongs and parrots such as the King Parrot.

**To do:** Look at the leaves. Feel them. How are they different from the leaves of many other native plants you know, such as Eucalypts, Casuarinas, Banksias, Hakeas, Geebungs and Acacias? Compare the berries of the Blueberry Ash with woody native fruits. Explain the differences in the leaves and fruits.

## Year 2

### Old Man Banksia, *Banksia serrata*



**Flowers:** cream flowers, January to June

**Fruit:** Up to one thousand flowers grow together on a cone. Only some of the flowers produce seeds on the large, shaggy cones. Two winged seeds grow inside each of the woody bumps which look like mouths when they open.

Most Australian native plants are found *only* in Australia. There are 76 different species of Banksia and they are all only in Australia. They are named after Joseph Banks, the botanist who sailed with Captain James Cook on the 'Endeavour'. In 1770 they landed at Botany Bay which was given its name because Joseph Banks was so excited at all the new plants – the botany.

**Who eats here?** The flowers make lots of nectar which is eaten by small marsupials and birds such as Honeyeaters.

**To do:** In which Australian book do the Old Man Banksia cones become big, bad 'Banksia Men'? Who is the author? Can your class find one or two old cones on the ground to turn into Banksia men?

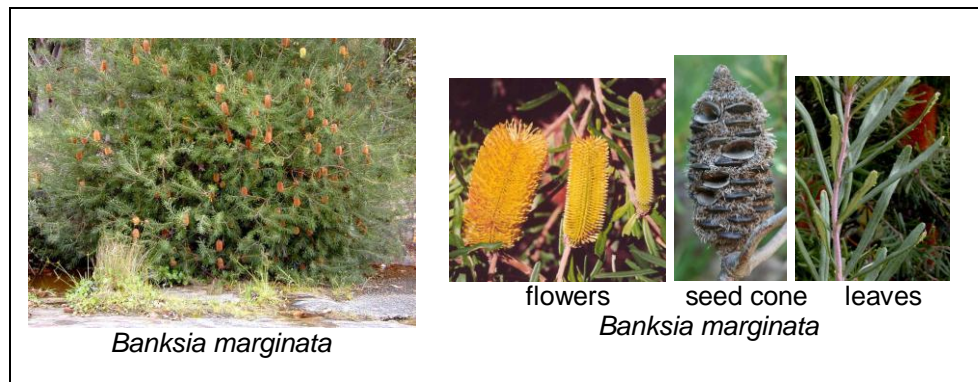
Trace around a leaf. Why do you think this Banksia is called *serrata*. Draw a *serrated* knife. What do we cut with a knife like this?

## Year 2

### Banksia species

**Coast Banksia**, *Banksia integrifolia*

also at school: *Banksia spinulosa*, *Banksia marginata*



**Flowers:** All Banksias have similar flower-heads with many tiny flowers together, but they are different sizes, shapes and colours.

**Fruit:** All Banksias have cones with woody capsules for the seeds.

Life near the beach can be very tough for a plant. The soil is sandy and doesn't have much food or water for plants. Often there are strong winds, and lots of salt in the air. Coast Banksia can grow to a small tree, even in these harsh conditions near the beach.

*Banksia spinulosa* and *Banksia marginata* are smaller Banksias which grow as shrubs or small trees in heath or in woodland.

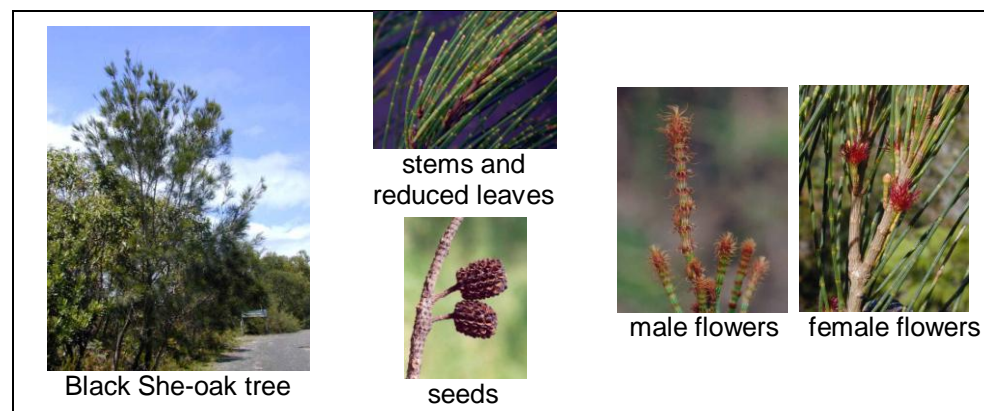
**Aboriginal use:** Aboriginal people used to soak the flower spikes in water to make a sweet drink, or just suck nectar straight off the flowers. Banksia cones were used to carry fire because they could be carried for long distances as they smouldered.

**Who eats here?** The nectar is eaten by insects, birds and small marsupials like bats, Sugar Gliders, Flying Foxes and possums.

**To do:** Watch to see when different Banksias flower. Rub your finger to taste the nectar early in the morning. Now watch to see how long till the flowers turns into the fruit, a seed cone.

## Year 5

### Black She-Oak, *Allocasuarina littoralis*



**Flowers:** There are separate male and female flowers in summer to autumn, usually on separate trees. The tiny male flowers have masses of brown pollen. The red female flowers turn into seed cones.

**Fruit:** cylindrical cones with a flat top; dark brown, shiny seeds

**Aboriginal use:** The wood was used for making spears.

**Who eats here?** The seeds of this tree are a main food for Black Cockatoos. Microscopic fungi grow in the roots and their fruit, or truffles, are dug up and eaten by marsupials such as bandicoots, Bettongs and Potoroos. The spores then pass through the animal's gut which makes them ready to grow. The fungi become part of the tree's root system, helping it absorb more nutrients and water.

**To do:** The green needle-like part that we think is the leaf, is actually the stem. Take a stem, look at the joins, then break it apart. With a hand lens look at the tiny, jagged edge – all that is left of the real leaves. The stem has taken over the leaf's job of turning the sun's energy into food. This is one of many clever ways that Australian plants have adapted to survive with little water. Leaves get carbon dioxide through tiny holes called stomates, but water is also lost through these holes. On Casuarina stems the stomates are hidden in the channels, and a tough skin helps to keep water in.

Find some unopened cones and store them in a paper bag for a few weeks until they release their seeds.

## Year 4

### Native Sarsaparilla, *Smilax glyciphylla*



**Flowers:** tiny, cream, cup-shaped flowers, spring to summer

**Fruit:** black berries, mainly in winter

This wiry climber has stems several metres long and grows in rainforest, gullies and moister forest along the east coast. The leaves have three parallel veins and the underside is paler.

**Aboriginal uses:** The young pink leaves are slightly sweet to suck. The leaves and fruit were eaten as a medicine for coughs and chest complaints. The leaves contain glycyphyllin, which gives them a bitter-sweet flavour and may act like a medicine.

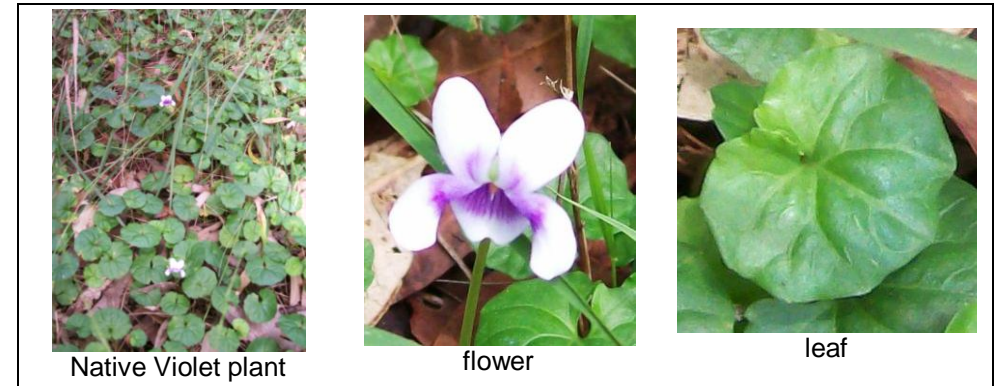
**Who eats here?** Fruit-eating birds and marsupials eat the berries.

It was named Native Sarsaparilla by the early settlers and they brewed it as a tea. In 1790 Surgeon – General John White wrote that this plant was a good general tonic and helped prevent scurvy. The leaves were used as a medicine for coughs and chest complaints and were exported to China for herbal medicine from 1840 –1870.

**To do:** If the Smilax plants look like they can spare a few leaves, your teacher can pick some young ones and give you a bit each to suck. Spit them out onto soil afterwards – they'll just rot down!

## Year 2

### Native Violet, *Viola hederacea*



**Flowers:** small, white and purple flowers for most of the year

**Fruit:** small, soft, oval, green capsule

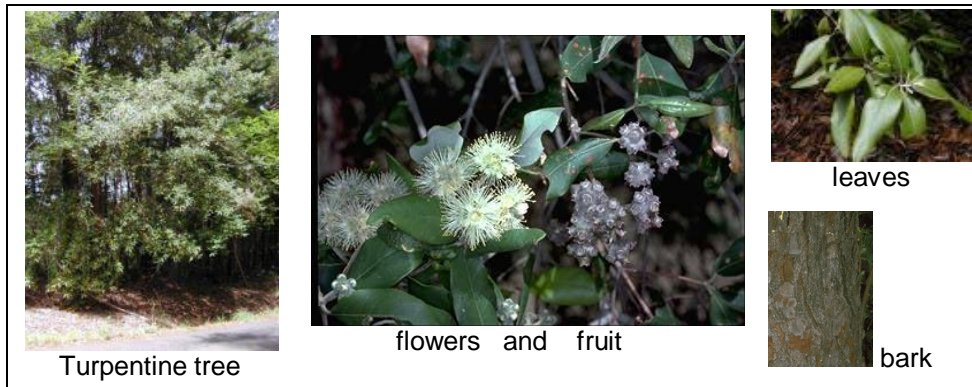
There are 450 different species of violet around the world and six species of native violets in Australia. Native Violets grow in damp, shady spots but can also survive in dry times. They are groundcovers which form a mat covering the soil. Grasses and groundcovers do just that – they cover the ground and hold the soil together with their roots. Without grasses and groundcovers the topsoil, which has the most food for the plants, gets washed away by rain or blown away by wind. Losing soil is called erosion and this is a big problem in much of Australia.

**Who eats here?** Butterflies and small birds eat the nectar and pollen. Swamp Wallabies and Bettongs would eat the leaves.

**To do:** Use watercolours and coloured pencils to paint a patch of Native Violet.

## Year 3

### Turpentine, *Syncarpia glomulifera*



**Flowers:** October to December

**Fruit:** The woody fruits look like spaceships with openings where seeds come out.

This tall tree only grows on richer, moister soils. It is named because early settlers thought that the clear liquid coming out of its bark looked like turpentine. However, no part of the tree actually smells like turpentine. Most Turpentines have been cut down around Sydney as their straight trunks give good timber for building. It is still used for the piles of jetties as it lasts well in water.

**Who eats here?** Birds eat the nectar and the insects which live on the tree. The seeds are tiny and are eaten by insects such as ants.

**To do:** Look on the ground and find some of the 'spaceship' fruit. Count how many holes there are for seeds. Are the seeds still inside? Collect some to use for craft – what could you make?

## Year 4

### Broad-leaf Geebung, *Persoonia levis*



**Flowers:** yellow flowers, September to December

**Fruit:** The female part of the flower called the style stays attached to the top of the oval berry which turns from green to dark purple.

There are 90 different species of Geebungs, found all over Australia. Another local species is Pine-leaf Geebung which has narrow leaves that look like pine needles. Look at the Broad-leaf Geebung. Under its black, flaky bark, the stem is bright orange. The thick bark helps it to survive fire.

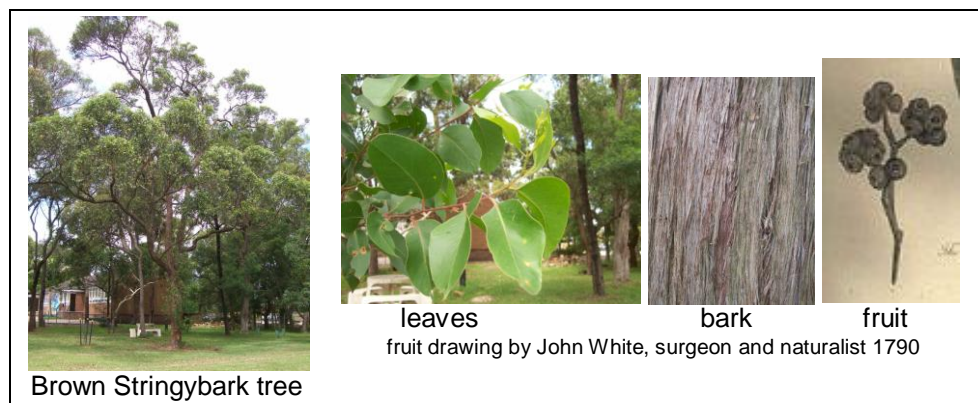
**Aboriginal use:** Berries, although sour, are edible when dark purple.

**Who eats here?** Small birds eat the nectar and insects which live on the tree. When the berries fall to the ground, they are eaten by larger birds and animals such as emus, wallabies and kangaroos. Inside the soft berry is the seed with a very hard, tough coating. The seeds only sprout after they have been through an animal's digestive system which helps to break down this coating. It is very difficult for people to sprout Geebung seeds without this process. This is one of the many ways plants and animals depend on each other.

**To do:** Don't pick flowers and berries in the bush. Why not? Explain why this is so important using words and diagrams.

## Year 4

### Brown Stringybark, *Eucalyptus capitellata*



**Flowers:** white or cream flowers in summer

**Fruit:** The name 'Eucalyptus' comes from two Greek words: 'eu' meaning 'well', and 'kalyptos' meaning 'covered'. This name was chosen because the flower bud is 'well-covered' with a cap. As the flower dies, the seeds grow in a green capsule which later turns into a dry, woody gumnut.

The Brown Stringybark is one of the main canopy trees in our Duffys Forest. It has very long leaves of 10 – 17 centimetres.

**Aboriginal use:** The stringy bark was used to make rope and fishing nets. The bark could also be used to make canoes.

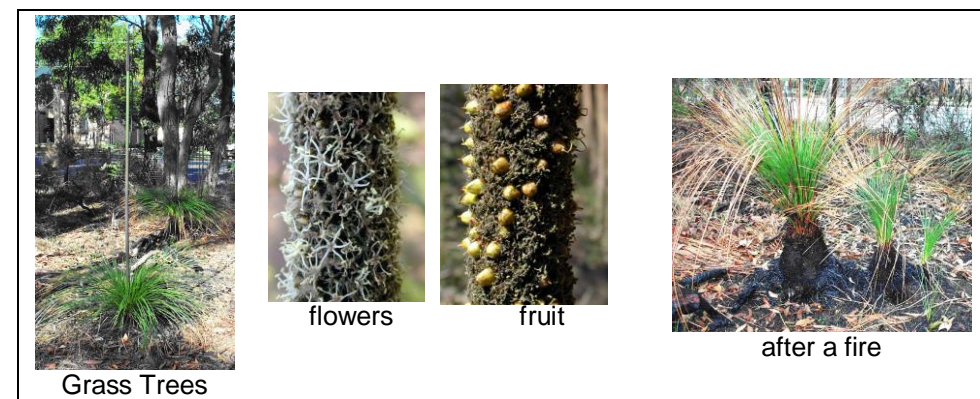
**Who eats here?** All Eucalypts are home to lots of insects and so attract insect-eating birds such as Pardalots and Noisy Miners.

**To do:** Collect the tiny seeds by putting some gumnuts in a paper bag. Tip onto white paper when the gumnuts have opened.

Use a crayon on its side to make bark and leaf rubbings of each of the trees you have learned about. Present them with clear labels. You could also attach or draw their fruits. How do the barks and fruits protect these trees through drought and fire?

## Year 3

### Grass Tree, *Xanthorrhoea media*



**Flowers:** flowers on a tall spike, early summer or after fire

**Fruit:** shiny, black seeds in capsules on the spike

Grass Trees grow very slowly – about one to two centimetres a year. There are 28 different species in Australia. Some Grass Trees, like this species, have their woody trunk mostly below ground. Others have their trunk above ground.

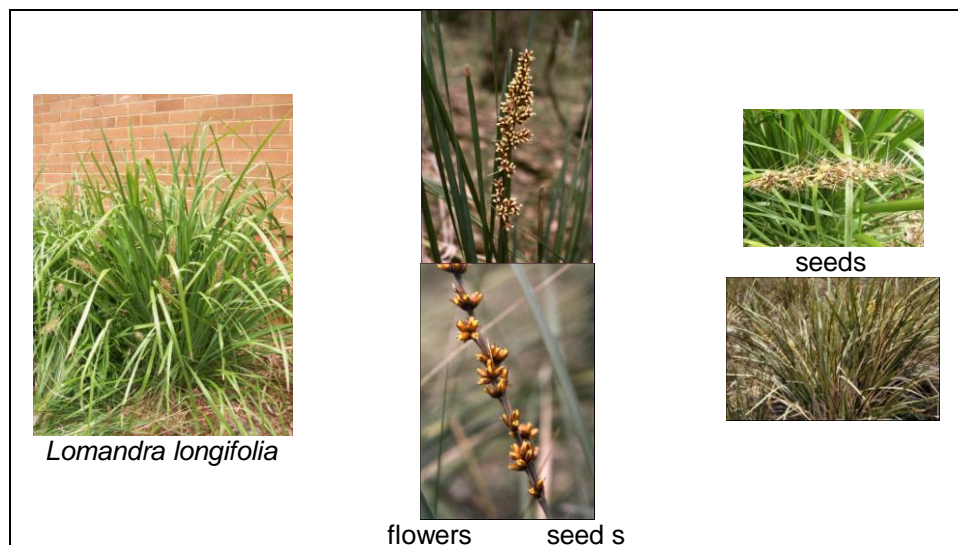
**Aboriginal use:** Every part of the Grass Tree could be used. The flowers are rich in nectar. The flower spikes were useful for lightweight fishing spears. The leaves were woven. The resin in the trunk melts when it is heated. It then sets hard, so it was used to glue axes and spears.

**Who eats here?** The tiny Eastern Pygmy Possum, native bees and other insects eat the nectar and pollinate the flowers. The Black Cockatoo eats the seeds.

**To do:** Draw a Grass Tree. Look carefully at how the leaves come out from the trunk. You could use charcoal for the trunk as they are usually black from fire.

## Year 3

### Spiny-headed Mat-rush, *Lomandra longifolia*



**Flowers:** stalks with spiky bunches of tiny, strongly scented flowers ranging from creamy to bright orange; August to December

**Fruit:** hard, bright orange to brown seed capsules that open to shed hundreds of rice-like seeds

**Aboriginal use:** Aboriginal people collected many types of seeds and ground them to make seed cakes which they baked on hot coals. This was done with seeds from species of *Lomandra*, wattles and grasses. *Lomandra* leaf bases and flowers are also edible. The leaves were soaked and used for weaving baskets and fish traps.

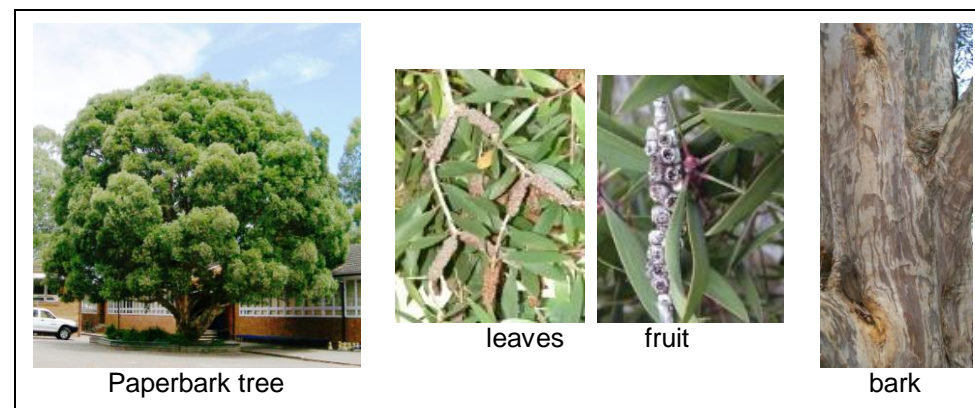
Seeds are an important part of our diet too. Which seeds do you eat?

**Who eats here?** The nectar is eaten by insects such as flying ants, beetles and native bees. The tough, long leaves provide cover for bandicoots to hide in while they burrow for grubs.

**To do:** With your teacher, cut some older leaves from the outside of a few different *Lomandra* plants. Soak them and see if you can weave them together. What can you make?

## Year 4

### Paperbark, *Melaleuca quinquenervia*



**Flowers:** white or greenish, autumn and winter

**Fruit:** many small (4-5 mm diameter) fruit usually grouped together in a cluster along the stem; many tiny seeds

**Aboriginal use:** Aboriginal people had many uses for the bark of paperbark trees. What can you think of?

Here are some of its uses: wrapping food to cook in the coals of a fire, carrying water or food, for sleeping mats or shelters, wrapping newborn babies or mending holes in canoes.

When the flowers are soaked in water, the nectar makes a sweet drink. The leaves were crushed and smelled for coughs and colds.

**Who eats here?** When the tree is flowering, many birds come to eat the nectar such as Honeyeaters, Lorrikeets and Noisy Miners, as well as Fruit Bats. In the branches of our Paperbark a Ring Tail Possum built its nest, or drey, and a Tawny Frogmouth has been seen resting.

**To do:** Hold a leaf up to the light and find the little shiny dots. These are the oil glands. Crush the leaf and smell it.

As the tree grows, the bark falls off. If any is on the ground, take some and use it for art. Perhaps you could paint an Aboriginal design on it. But don't ever pull bark off a tree – bark is like its skin!