



Australian National
Botanic Gardens

Alive with learning

Floral Emblems of Australia



This Floral Emblems of Australia kit is intended to be used as a stand-alone kit or in conjunction with a visit to the Australian National Botanic Gardens. This kit is intended for students Foundation to year 6.



Australian Government
Parks Australia

Enhance your experience

Consider a deeper learning experience by booking an Around Oz program with a focus on Floral Emblems at the Australian National Botanic Gardens.

Using this resource

This Floral Emblems of Australia kit is intended to be used as a stand-alone kit or in conjunction with a visit to the Australian National Botanic Gardens.

This kit can be used as outlined or to create your own activities.

This kit is intended for Foundation to year 6 and has links to both the Science and Humanities and Social Science curricula.

It contains:

- Curriculum links
- A printable poster
- Information about Floral Emblems
- Information about Australia's floral emblems
- Activities:
 - Team up and learn about Australia's Floral Emblems
 - What's your Floral Emblem – Head out for an adventure and find your own floral emblem
- Extension activities

Planning your Visit

Bookings are essential for all school excursions to the Gardens.

This includes both facilitated Ranger guided or teacher guided visits.

To make a booking, please visit Book Canberra Excursions –

<https://www.bookcanberraexcursions.com.au/>

Visit our website for a variety of planning tools, including:

- [Risk assessment](#)
- [Certificate of currency](#)
- [Pre-visit information](#)
- [Gardens map and guide](#)

Contact

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Email: education@anbg.gov.au



Curriculum links

F-7 Curriculum Links

Year	Subject	Code	Description
1	Science	ACSSU017	Living things have a variety of external features
		ACSSU211	Living things live in different places where their needs are met
		ACSHE021	Science involves observing, asking questions about, and describing changes in, objects and events
		ACSIS025	Participate in guided investigations to explore and answer questions
		ACSIS026	Use informal measurements to collect and record observations, using digital technologies as appropriate
		ACSIS027	Use a range of methods to sort information, including drawings and provided tables and through discussion, compare observations with predictions
		ACSIS213	Compare observations with those of others
		ACSIS029	Represent and communicate observations and ideas in a variety of ways
2	Science	ACSIS038	Participate in guided investigations to explore and answer questions
		ACSIS039	Use informal measurements to collect and record observations, using digital technologies as appropriate
		ACSIS041	Compare observations with those of others
		ACSIS042	Represent and communicate observations and ideas in a variety of ways
2	HASS	ACHASSI041	Draw simple conclusions based on discussions, observations and information displayed in pictures and texts and on maps
		ACHASSI043	Present narratives, information and findings in oral, graphic and written forms using simple terms to denote the passing of time and to describe direction and location
3	Science	ACSIS060	Represent and communicate observations, ideas and findings using formal and informal representations
3	HASS	ACHASSK064	Days and weeks celebrated or commemorated in Australia (including Australia Day, Anzac Day, and National Sorry Day) and the importance of symbols and emblems
		ACHASSI052	Pose questions to investigate people, events, places and issues
		ACHASSI053	Locate and collect information and data from different sources, including observations
		ACHASSI054	Record, sort and represent data and the location of places and their characteristics in different formats, including simple graphs, tables and maps, using discipline-appropriate conventions
		ACHASSI057	Interpret data and information displayed in different formats, to identify and describe distributions and simple patterns
		ACHASSI061	Present ideas, findings and conclusions in texts and modes that incorporate digital and non-digital representations and discipline-specific terms

Year	Subject	Code	Description
4	Science	AC SIS071	Represent and communicate observations, ideas and findings using formal and informal representations
4	HASS	ACHASSK064	Days and weeks celebrated or commemorated in Australia (including Australia Day, Anzac Day, and National Sorry Day) and the importance of symbols and emblems
		ACHASSI073	Pose questions to investigate people, events, places and issues
		ACHASSI074	Locate and collect information and data from different sources, including observations
		ACHASSI075	Record, sort and represent data and the location of places and their characteristics in different formats, including simple graphs, tables and maps, using discipline-appropriate conventions
		ACHASSI078	Interpret data and information displayed in different formats, to identify and describe distributions and simple patterns
		ACHASSI082	Present ideas, findings and conclusions in texts and modes that incorporate digital and non-digital representations and discipline-specific terms
5	Science	AC SIS093	Communicate ideas, explanations and processes using scientific representations in a variety of ways, including multi-modal texts
5	HASS	ACHASSI095	Locate and collect relevant information and data from primary sources and secondary sources
		ACHASSI096	Organise and represent data in a range of formats including tables, graphs and large- and small-scale maps, using discipline-appropriate conventions
		ACHASSI100	Interpret data and information displayed in a range of formats to identify, describe and compare distributions, patterns and trends, and to infer relationships
		ACHASSI105	Present ideas, findings, viewpoints and conclusions in a range of texts and modes that incorporate source materials, digital and non-digital representations and discipline-specific terms and conventions
6	Science	AC SIS110	Communicate ideas, explanations and processes using scientific representations in a variety of ways, including multi-modal texts
6	HASS	ACHASSI123	Locate and collect relevant information and data from primary sources and secondary sources
		ACHASSI124	Organise and represent data in a range of formats including tables, graphs and large- and small-scale maps, using discipline-appropriate conventions
		ACHASSI128	Interpret data and information displayed in a range of formats to identify, describe and compare distributions, patterns and trends, and to infer relationships
		ACHASSI133	Present ideas, findings, viewpoints and conclusions in a range of texts and modes that incorporate source materials, digital and non-digital representations and discipline-specific terms and conventions

Getting started

The suggested order for using this resource is as follows.

- Class discussion
 - Discuss emblems, floral emblems and what they mean to a community or country (notes below).
 - Using the poster as a visual aid and the notes below as a guide, discuss Australia's Floral Emblems:
 - How is a floral emblem chosen?
 - Why these plants were the chosen floral emblems?
 - A bit of information about each of the plants.
 - Use the poster and its habitat depictions as the basis for understanding that Australia has many different landscapes, each with its own set of environmental conditions.
- Activity – Team up and learn about Australia's Floral Emblems.
- Activity – What's your floral emblem? **Printable resources on pages 7-12**
- Extension activities.

Class Discussion

Floral emblems

Floral emblems are used as a symbol of national identity. Many countries have national floral emblems, such as the Maple leaf in Canada and the Silver fern in New Zealand. Some countries, such as Australia also have state floral emblems.

Australia's Floral Emblems

Use the printable poster provided to discuss its habitat depictions. Australia has many different landscapes, each with its own set of environmental conditions. Floral emblems are usually plants found in the state or countries geographic region.

Look at the variety of flowers chosen to be state floral emblems in Australia. Use the information provided to discuss each one.



Team up and learn about *Australia's Floral Emblems*

This activity sheet is designed for teachers to explain activities to the students. These activities will change according to the year group.

Research and report

- Break the students into nine groups.
- Designate a floral emblem (including the national floral emblem) to each group and give them the relevant information sheet.
- Ask each group to do further research and do a short presentation on their plant, they could include an interesting fact or story about the plant.
- Alternatively, ask each group to make a poster about the plant.

Match the emblems

Printable resources on pages 23-31

- After speaking about each of the floral emblems, break the students into small groups.
- Give each group the following:
 - A picture of each of the flowers with a distribution map;
 - The name of each state or territory.
- Ask students to use the information provided on the maps and their own knowledge to match floral emblems to their state or territory.

Be the emblem

Printable resources on pages 32-33

- Give each of the students a line drawing map of Australia.
- Provide small cut out pictures or ask them to draw each of the floral emblems in the appropriate state or territories.
- Alternatively outline a map of Australia on the floor and have the students become the floral emblems:
 - Place students in their appropriate location on the floor map;
 - Have students learn something about their flower or why it is the floral emblem and discuss with the class.

Choosing your own floral emblem

Now that you have learned about floral emblems, you know that they can help to create a sense of community and act as a visual representation of an area.

Now it's your turn to choose a floral emblem for yourself, your school or your community.

Become a scientist

Discover

Go for a walk around your school, neighbourhood or local bushland. Observe the environment and find a native plant that you think is special and interesting.

Observe and Record

Size

- How big is the plant?
- Is it wide or thin?
- Does it look like a bush or a tree?
- Does it grow across the ground or straight up?



Describe the Leaves

- What colour, shape and texture are they?
- Is the top surface the same as the bottom?
- Use a magnifying glass to look more closely.
- Use a ruler to measure the leaf size.

Flowers, fruits and seeds

Describing flowers can be challenging because sometimes they change as they develop.

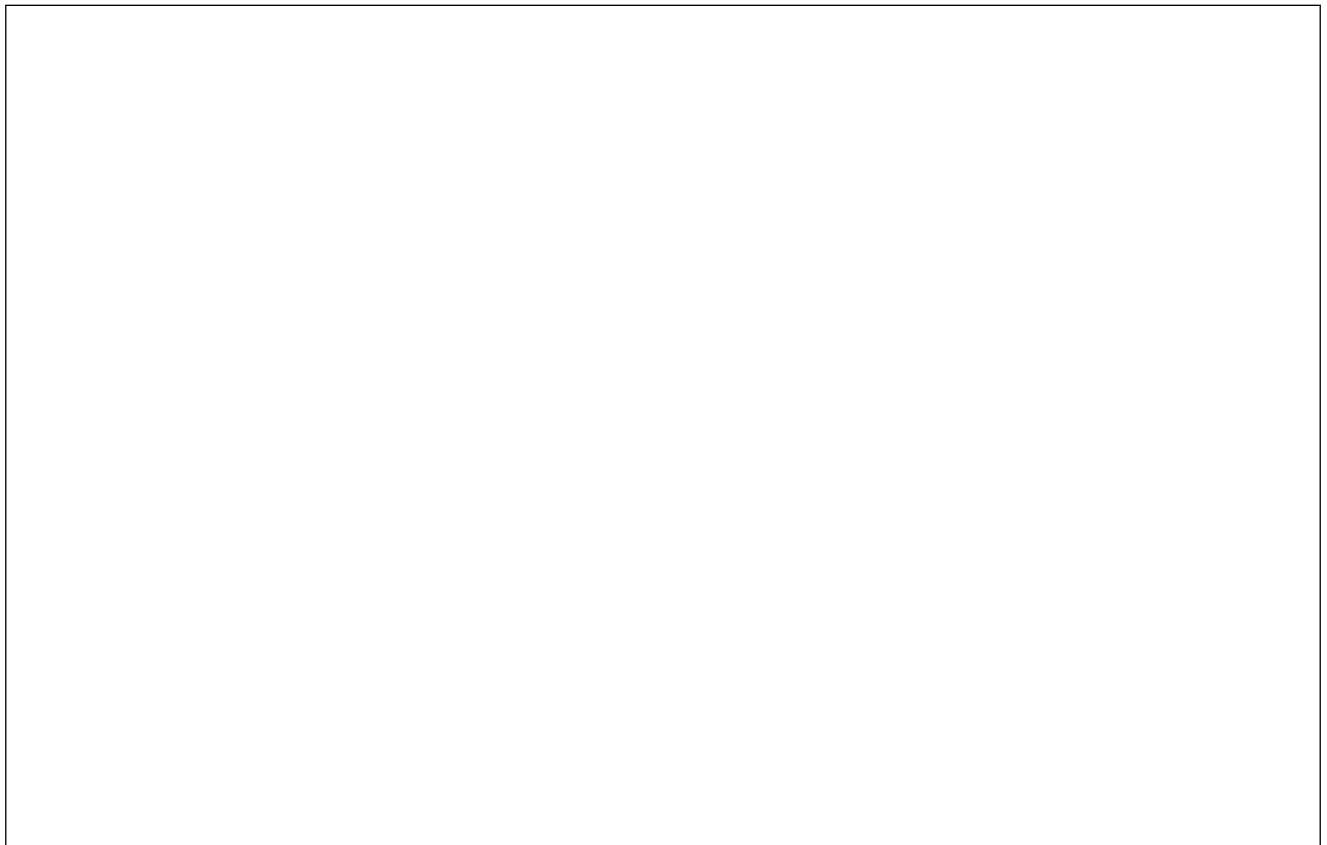
- Does the fruit or seed have any special or unusual features?
 - What colour are they?
 - What shape are they?
 - How many flower and fruits grow together?
 - What do the seeds look like?
-
-
-

Scientific Drawing

Botanical art has always been extremely important in the discovery and describing of plant species. Explorers like Captain Cook would take naturalists and artists on their voyages and these people discovered and drew new species of plants.

Look on the internet to find some botanical art by Sydney Parkinson who accompanied Captain Cook and Joseph Banks on the Endeavour to South America, Tahiti, New Zealand and Australia.

Draw a leaf, flower, fruit and seed (if you have them). Make notes of any measurements.



Research

It's time to identify your plant.

Look at the features of your plant:

- Leaves – Shape, colour, texture.
- Flowers – How many petals does it have? Colour, shape.
- Size of plant – Tree, shrub, ground cover.



How to identify your plant

- Download an app or look online at [iNaturalist](#) or [PlantNet](#) and engage with the scientific community.
- Visit your local library and look in field guides, learn how to use a plant identification key.
- Look online at plant keys (note - some online plant keys can be quite technical).
- Ask your teachers and friends if they recognise the plant then confirm their suggestions by doing further research.
- Do a general online search for features of your plant.
- If you are having trouble identifying your plant, try talking to your local botanic garden or national park officers.

Plant Names

Once you identify your plant, you will find that it has a few names.

Plants are known to most people by their common name like Waratah, Sturt's Desert Pea or Milkweed. Sometimes this can get confusing because different people call the same plant by different common names. Lots of completely different plants can have the same common name, but every plant has its own unique scientific name.

Scientific plant names have two parts *Genus* and *species*, for example Waratah's scientific name is *Telopea speciosissima*. Using the scientific name means everyone knows exactly what plant is being spoken about.

Common Name – *what people generally call the plant.*

What do most people call this plant in your area?

Are there any other names for it?

Scientific Name – *Made of two words; the first word is the plant's genus, the second is the species.*

What is the scientific name of this plant?

Plant Distribution

Plant distribution describes where the plant is found and how many plants are in each area.

From your research, mark on the map where your plant grows. You can look online at the Atlas of Living Australia for this activity – www.ala.org.au

Does it grow with other plants or alone?

Any other observations? (i.e. it only grows in shade, it grows next to wetlands)

Mark on the map of Australia where your plant grows.



You could make a map of your neighbourhood to show where each of these plants is found.

Did you find anything else interesting about your plant?

A history of your floral emblem

Why did you choose this plant to be your school's floral emblem?

Extension activities

Further your learning about floral emblems by doing the following activities.

- Research and write a news article or story about your floral emblem and why you chose it.
- Make an information display poster about your floral emblem.
- Paint or draw your floral emblem, or colour in our line drawings (**Printable resources pages 34-42**).
- Vote to choose a floral emblem for your class. As part of the voting process students could develop their persuasive writing skills through producing a persuasive speech or article outlining WHY their chosen plant should be the class/school emblem.

Visit <https://education.aec.gov.au/getvoting/> for ideas on how to run an election at your school.



Floral Emblem of Australia

Common Name: Golden Wattle

Scientific Name: *Acacia pycnantha*

Family: Mimosaceae

Where does it grow?

Golden Wattle often grows below taller trees in open forests. Sometimes it is found growing in the open by itself.

The Golden Wattle is found in places where it is not very hot and where there is a rainfall of 350 mm to 1000 mm most years.

Size: *Acacia pycnantha* is a shrub or small tree about 4 to 8 metres tall.

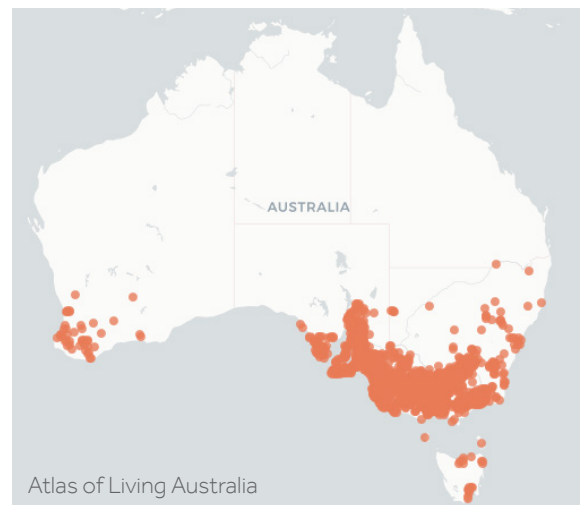
Leaves: After the seedling stage, the feathery 'true' leaves fall off. Flattened leaf stalks called phyllodes grow and take over the job of photosynthesis from the leaves. The phyllodes are leathery, 6 to 20 cm long, shaped like thick curving knives and are bright green in colour.

Flowers, fruit and seeds: In spring the *Acacia pycnantha* has large fluffy golden yellow flower heads with up to seventy very small, sweetly scented flowers in each head. These contrast vividly with the green leaves. The fruit pods are dark brown and 7 to 12 cm long. They are split along one side so they can release their hard-brown seeds.

The Story

There was much debate over whether the Golden Wattle or the Waratah should be Australia's floral emblem. Team Wattle and Team Waratah battled it out in newspapers, town halls and committee meetings, determined for their chosen flower to take out the title. Archibald Campbell who founded the Victorian Wattle Club in 1899 was passionate about Acacia's and encouraged Australians to think of the Wattle as a symbol of patriotism. At the same time R. T. Baker, a botanist and museum curator, advocated the choice of the Waratah as the Australian national flower. He wrote:

"The expression 'the land of the Waratah', applies to Australia and no other; it is Australia's very own. In the Wattle, Australia has not a monopoly like the Waratah, for Africa has over one hundred native wattles, and it also occurs in America, East and West Indies and the Islands. Then again it is not too much to say that throughout the whole botanical world the Waratah is probably unsurpassed as a flower for decorative purposes, and it is impossible to so conventionalise it out of recognition a great feature in a national flower."



The Golden Wattle became prominent in Australia in 1912 when Rt Hon Andrew Fisher MP suggested it be included in the Commonwealth Coat of Arms.

On 1 September 1988, at the Australian National Botanic Gardens, the Commonwealth Government made the announcement that the *Acacia pycnantha*, the Golden Wattle, would become Australia's national emblem. The 1st of September is now known as National Wattle Day.

There are more than 760 different kinds of wattle growing all over Australia. Wattle is ideally suited to withstand Australia's droughts, winds and bushfires. The resilience of wattle represents the spirit of the Australian people.

Did you know?

Indigenous peoples of Australia soaked the gum of the golden wattle in water and honey to produce a sweet, toffee-like substance.

Did you know?

Australia's official colours, green and gold, are inspired by the colours of the Wattle.



The Commonwealth Coat of Arms
Can you see the golden wattle?



The launch of the *Acacia pycnantha* as the national floral emblem.
Australian National Botanic Gardens 1988

1959-60 postage stamp
featuring the Golden Wattle.
This stamp cost 2 shillings.

New South Wales

Common Name: Waratah

Scientific Name: *Telopea speciosissima*

Family: Proteaceae

Where does it grow?

The Waratah is widespread on the central coast and adjoining mountains of New South Wales.

Size: The Waratah is a sturdy, upright shrub which can grow to 4 metres tall.

Leaves: The leaves are dark green and leathery. They are 13 to 25 cm long and have spiky, toothed edges.

Flowers, fruit and seeds: The red flowers have rounded heads that are about 7 to 10 cm across. Flowers grow from September to November and are pollinated by nectar seeking birds. The seeds are large with a wing, allowing it to be dispersed by the wind. The winged seeds are released when the brown leathery seed pods split along one side.

The Story

There was much heated debate about whether the Waratah should be Australia's national floral emblem. Due to it only growing on the east coast of Australia and Tasmania it lost out to the Golden Wattle. However, being a much loved, admired and recognised flower, the *Telopea speciosissima* was proclaimed the official floral emblem of New South Wales on 24 October 1962.

Did you know?

'Waratah' is an Aboriginal name meaning 'red-flowering tree'. The first written record of this name can be found in notebooks of the First Fleet's Lieutenant William Dawes from 1788.

While most Waratahs are red there is a white variety! In Gulpilil's stories of the Dreamtime all Waratahs were originally white until a wonga pigeon was attacked by a hawk and bled on the flower turning it red.

The Scientific name *Telopea* means 'seen from afar' while *speciosissima* means 'most beautiful'.



Queensland

Common Name: Cooktown Orchid

Scientific Name: *Dendrobium bigibbum*

Family: Orchidaceae

Where does it grow?

The Cooktown Orchid grows naturally in northern Queensland. Although it is found in tropical areas with very high rainfall in summer, it isn't a rainforest species. The Cooktown Orchid grows out in the open usually attached to tree trunks.

Size: Plants are up to 80 cm in height. It usually has 3 to 20 flowering stems that can be up to 1.5 cm in diameter.

Leaves: The Cooktown Orchid has three to six leaves that are 5 to 12 cm long. The leaves grow on the upper parts of the base of the plant.

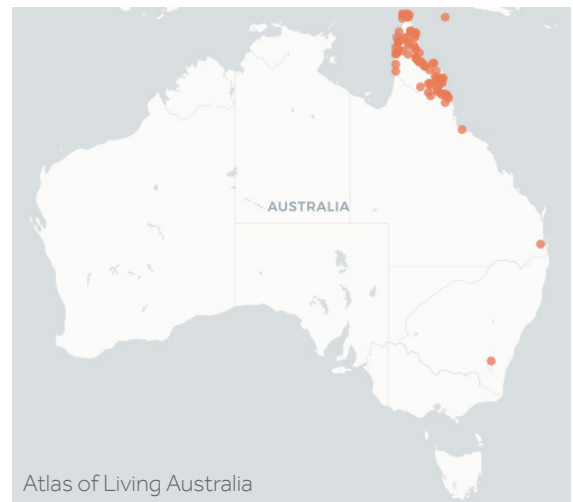
Flowers, fruit and seeds: The stems that grow flowers are usually 10 to 40 cm long and can carry up to 20 flowers. Each flower is about 3 to 6 cm wide and usually coloured deep to pale lilac, or sometimes white. It usually flowers in the dry season in the wild.

The Story

When Queensland prepared for its Centenary in 1959, the state government looked for a native flower to become the states floral emblem. The guidelines were that it had to be an easily cultivated native species found only in Queensland, decorative and distinctive in appearance, and close to the state colour, maroon. A newspaper asked the public for suggestions. A list of thirteen species was made. There were 10,917 entries into a public poll and the Cooktown Orchid won by thousands of votes. On 19 November 1959 the Cooktown Orchid was proclaimed as the floral emblem.

Did you know?

The Cooktown Orchid used to grow in abundance around Cooktown but today is quite rare. The orchid is listed as "vulnerable" under the Australian Government Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. It is illegal to collect the Cooktown Orchid from its natural environment without a license.



Victoria

Common Name: Common Heath

Scientific Name: *Epacris impressa*

Family: Epacridaceae

Where does it grow?

Common Heath occurs across a wide area of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania, including coastal heathlands.

Size: Common Heath is a slender, upright shrub which grows to about a metre in height.

Leaves: The rigid leaves are narrow and are about 4 to 16 mm in length with sharp points.

Flowers, fruit and seeds: The flowers have a tube shape and can grow up to 25mm long. They are often so densely packed around the stem that the bunch of flowers looks like a brush. The Common Heath flowers from late autumn to late spring and has its peak flowering in winter. The fruit is a capsule which splits open to release tiny seeds. Common Heath can grow in lots of different colours but the pink form is the one chosen as Victoria's floral emblem.

The Story

Victoria was the first Australian state to officially recognise a floral emblem. Representatives of a variety of Victorian government departments, societies and individuals met on 18 September 1951 and unanimously agreed on Common Heath as the State floral emblem. The pink form of Common Heath, *Epacris impressa*, was proclaimed the floral emblem of Victoria on 11 November 1958.

Did you know?

The Common Heath has quite a tale of discovery. In 1793 a French botanist Jacques-Julien Houton de Labillardiere was on a voyage with Bruny D'Entrecasteaux. On this trip the botanist collected the Common Heath in Tasmania. Later that year Bruny D'Entrecasteaux passed away and the ships that they were travelling on, which also contained the plants, were handed over to the Dutch in Java. The botanist was then imprisoned from October 1793 to March 1795. When he returned to France he found that his plant collection (more than 4,000 plants!) had been sent to England as a prize of war. Joseph Banks assisted in getting the collection sent back to the botanist who was finally able to scientifically describe the Common Heath in 1805.



Western Australia

Common Name: Red and Green Kangaroo Paw

Scientific Name: *Anigozanthos manglesii*

Family: Haemodoraceae

Where does it grow?

The Red and Green Kangaroo Paw occurs naturally in heath on sandy soil in the hilly regions behind Perth.

Size: Red and Green Kangaroo Paw grows from an underground stem. The flower stem can grow to about a meter tall.

Leaves: The broad leaves are about 30 to 60 cm long and have a sharp point.

Flowers, fruit and seeds: The flowers are produced between August and October. The stem and the bases of the flowers are usually deep red and covered with woolly hairs. The colour changes suddenly to a brilliant green for the length of the flower which splits open revealing the smooth pale green inside.

The Story

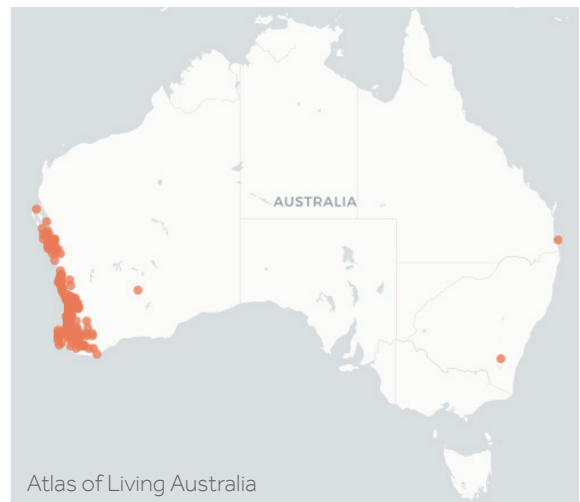
The Kangaroo Paw was recommended as the WA floral emblem by the state's Tourist Development Authority. It was thought that the flower could increase tourism and interest in WA's flowers. In 1960 while announcing the choice of the WA Floral Emblem the Premier of Western Australia, David Brand, said:

'The Kangaroo Paw is so outstanding that it was the logical choice. It has grace and beauty, striking colour and distinctive outline, and it grows naturally only in Western Australia.'

Anigozanthos manglesii was proclaimed the floral emblem of Western Australia on 9 November 1960.

Did you know?

The first European person to collect the Kangaroo Paw was the same person who first collected the Victorian and Tasmanian floral emblems. French botanist, Jacques-Julian Houton de Labillardiere collected the Kangaroo Paw in 1792 while his scientific expedition was sheltering near Esperance.



South Australia

Common Name: Sturt's Desert Pea

Scientific Name: *Swainsona formosa*

Family: Fabaceae

Where does it grow?

The Sturt's Desert Pea occurs in all mainland States except Victoria. It is naturally found in arid woodlands and on open plains.

Size: The Sturt's Desert Pea grows to about 30 cm tall and may sprawl out over several square metres.

Leaves: The silky grey-green leaves spring from stems that grow low to the ground. The leaves and stems are covered with fluffy hairs.

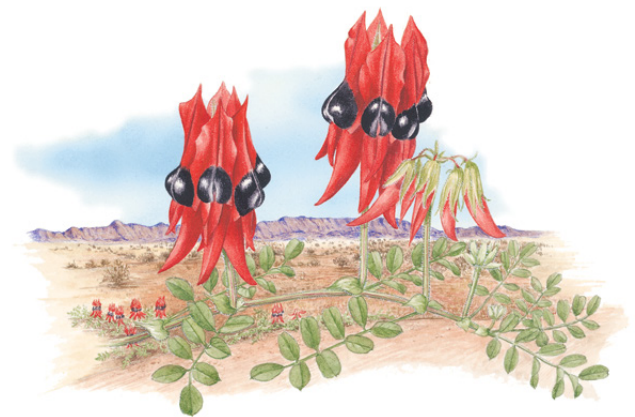
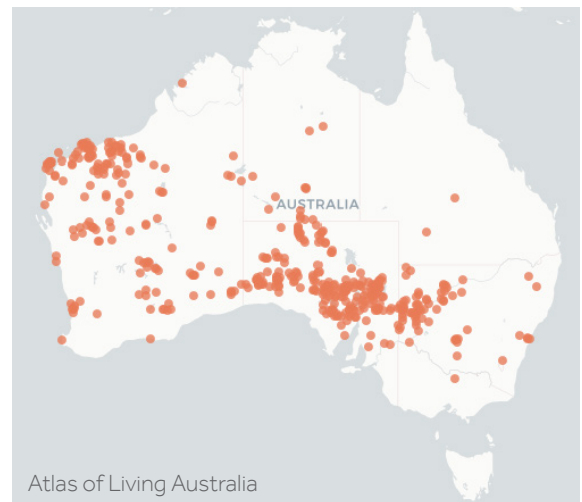
Flowers, fruit and seeds: The flowers are about 9 cm long and grow together in groups of six to eight flowers. The petals are usually blood red or scarlet with a glossy black swollen part at the base of the top petal. The fruit is a legume about 5 cm long which splits open when it is mature and releases some flat, kidney-shaped seeds.

The Story

Swainsona formosa was adopted as the floral emblem of South Australia on 23 November 1961. It makes an ideal floral emblem due to its distinctive shape and colour. Sturt's Desert Pea, the common name of the flower, commemorates Captain Charles Sturt who was an explorer of inland Australia. Sturt noted the beauty of this flower several times in his journals.

Did you know?

Even though the first official collection of Sturt's Desert Pea was in 1699, it is still in the Sheridan Herbarium in Oxford, England. This collection was made by William Dampier, a British navigator. He collected the plant on Rosemary Island in the Dampier Archipelago.



Tasmania

Common Name: Tasmanian Blue Gum

Scientific Name: *Eucalyptus globulus*

Family: Myrtaceae

Where does it grow?

The Tasmanian Blue Gum grows in tall open forest in south-eastern Tasmania. It also occurs on King and Flinders Islands in Bass Strait. Outside Tasmania it mainly grows in sections of southern Victoria.

Size: Tasmanian Blue Gum is a tall, straight tree. It can grow to about 70 metres in height and 2 metres in trunk diameter.

Leaves: The name 'blue gum' comes from its young, leaves having a blue-grey waxy look. These young leaves are broad and about 6 to 15 cm long. The older, mature leaves are narrow and a darker shining green. They are about 15 to 35 cm in length.

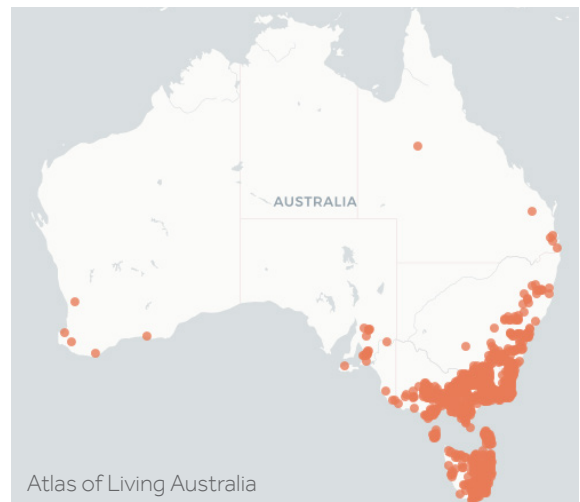
Flowers, fruit and seeds: The flower buds are ribbed and warty looking. The flowers are cream in colour and grow by themselves (singularly). The woody fruits are about 1.5 to 2.5 cm in diameter. When the time comes to drop its seeds, small valves open on the top of the fruit to allow tiny seeds to fall out.

The Story

The Tasmanian Blue Gum was first collected on the south-east coast of Tasmania in 1792–93 by French explorer Jacques-Julien Houton de Labillardiere, who also collected the Victorian and Western Australian floral emblems. It occurs naturally in the open forests of Southeast Tasmania and along the east coast. It also occurs on King and Flinders Islands and some parts of southern Victoria. It was proclaimed as the floral emblem of Tasmania on 27 November 1962.

Did you know?

The tall straight timber of the Blue gum is pale, hard and durable and eucalypt oil can be extracted from the leaves. Because it is a beautiful and useful tree, it has been introduced to many other countries. You can see Tasmanian Blue Gum growing in the Mediterranean, Africa, India, California, Chile, Argentina and New Zealand.



Northern Territory

Common Name: Sturt's Desert Rose

Scientific Name: *Gossypium sturtianum*

Family: Malvaceae

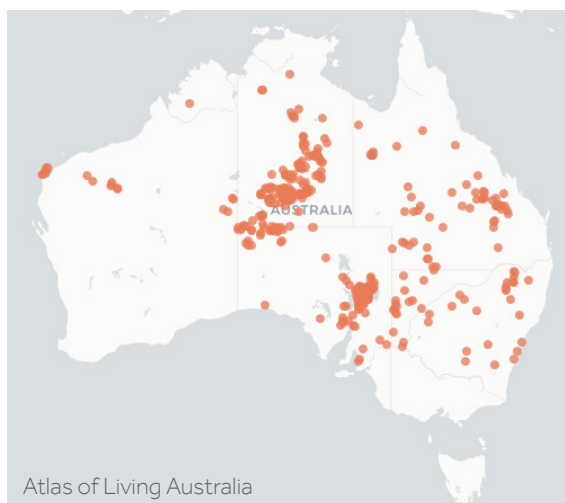
Where does it grow?

Sturt's Desert Rose grows naturally on stony or rocky slopes or in dry creek beds across central Australia.

Size: The Sturt's Desert Rose is a small shrub that grows about a metre in height.

Leaves: The leaves are dark green with a round to oval shape. The leaves grow to about 5 cm long.

Flowers, fruit and seeds: The mauve flower petals of the Sturt's Desert Rose are about 5 cm long with red bases. The red base provides a contrast in the centre of the flower. The fruit is a capsule shape and is about 1 cm long. The capsule contains lots of small seeds covered with short silky hairs.



The Story

On 12 July 1961, Sturt's Desert Rose was proclaimed the floral emblem of the Northern Territory by the Commonwealth Government, which at that time was responsible for the administration of the Territory.

In 1978, as the Northern Territory was becoming a self-governing Territory, the government asked the public to design a flag. The public suggestions were then used in the final design. The design uses the official colours, black, white and ochre, an artistic form of Sturt's Desert Rose and the Southern Cross constellation.

Although the flower usually has 5 petals, two were added for symbolic reasons. The seven white petals and the seven-pointed black star in the flower's centre represent the six Australian States and the Northern Territory.



Did you know?

The Sturt's Desert Rose species belongs to the same genus, *Gossypium*, as commercial cotton. However, the hairs covering the seeds are much shorter than the lint of commercial cotton. The Sturt's Desert Rose is also known as Cotton Rosebush and Australian Cotton.

Australian Capital Territory

Common Name: Royal Bluebell

Scientific Name: *Wahlenbergia gloriosa*

Family: Campanulaceae

Where does it grow?

The Royal Bluebell grows mainly in subalpine woodland in the mountains of the Australian Capital Territory, south-eastern New South Wales and Victoria.

Size: *Wahlenbergia gloriosa* is a small plant that grows all year round. The plant grows to about 30 cm across.

Leaves: The leaves of the Royal Bluebell are oblong and about 2.5 cm long, with wavy edges.

Flowers, fruit and seeds: The violet blue flowers grow up to 2 to 3 cm in diameter and usually have a paler centre. The pale flower centre is caused by the petals having a lighter blue base. The style is purple and usually ends in two white stigmas (these are the reproductive parts of the plant). The flowers may stand upright or droop down and grow on long slender stems.

The Story

A committee was put together to choose the floral emblem of the ACT. The Chair of the committee was Dr Robert Boden, then Director of the Australian National Botanic Gardens. Mr Max Gray and Professor Lindsay Pryor provided botanical advice and Mrs Lorna Rudduck and Mr Derek Wrigley assessed each species for design purposes.

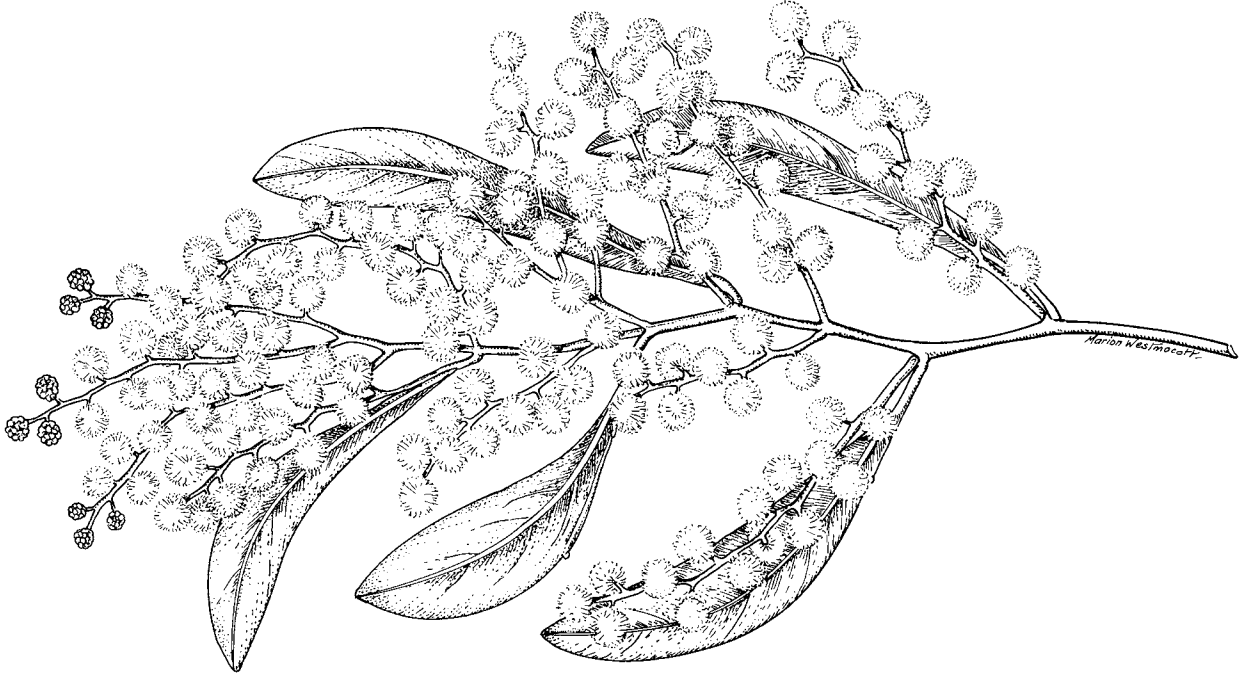
The floral emblem needed to fit several criteria, including growing naturally in the ACT, design potential and horticultural merit. The committee voted unanimously on the Royal Bluebell which was announced as the floral emblem of the Australian Capital Territory on 26 May 1982 by the Federal Minister for the Capital Territory.

Did you know?

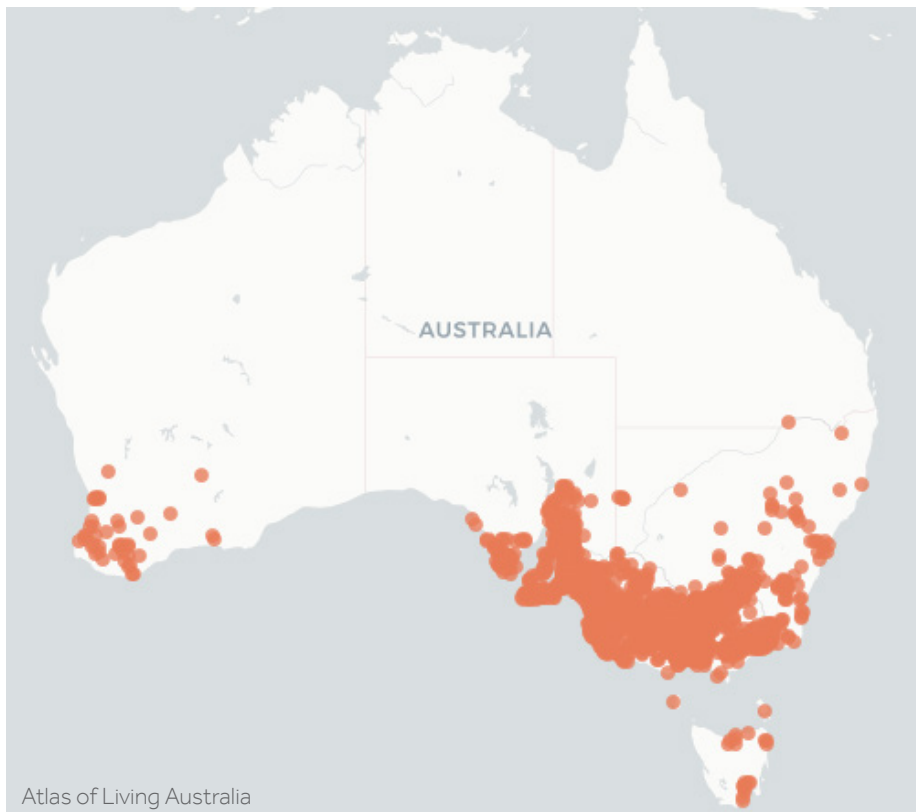
A German botanist, Heinrich Schrader, suggested the Royal Bluebell as the floral emblem of the ACT in honour of Georg Goran Wahlenberg (1780-1851), Professor of Botany at Uppsala, Sweden. The species name *gloriosa* is Latin for 'superb' or 'glorious', which is a reference to the superb qualities of a plant that is worth cultivating.



National Floral Emblem



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New South Wales



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Queensland

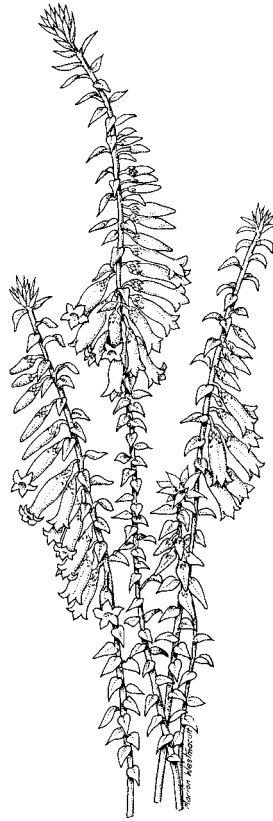


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Victoria



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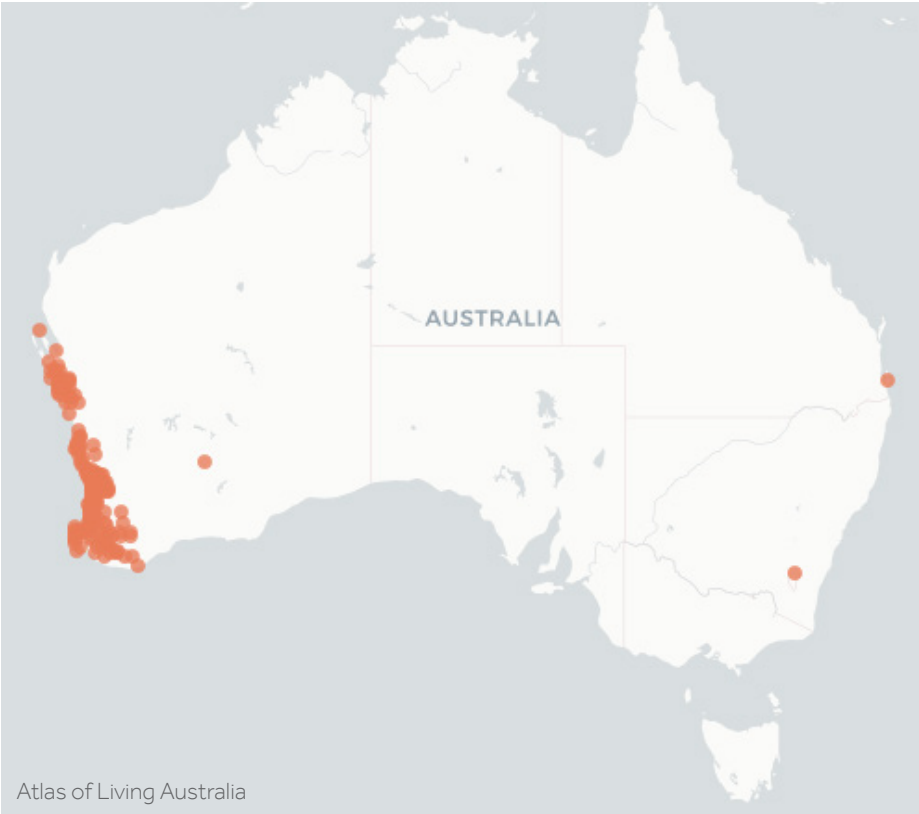


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Western Australia

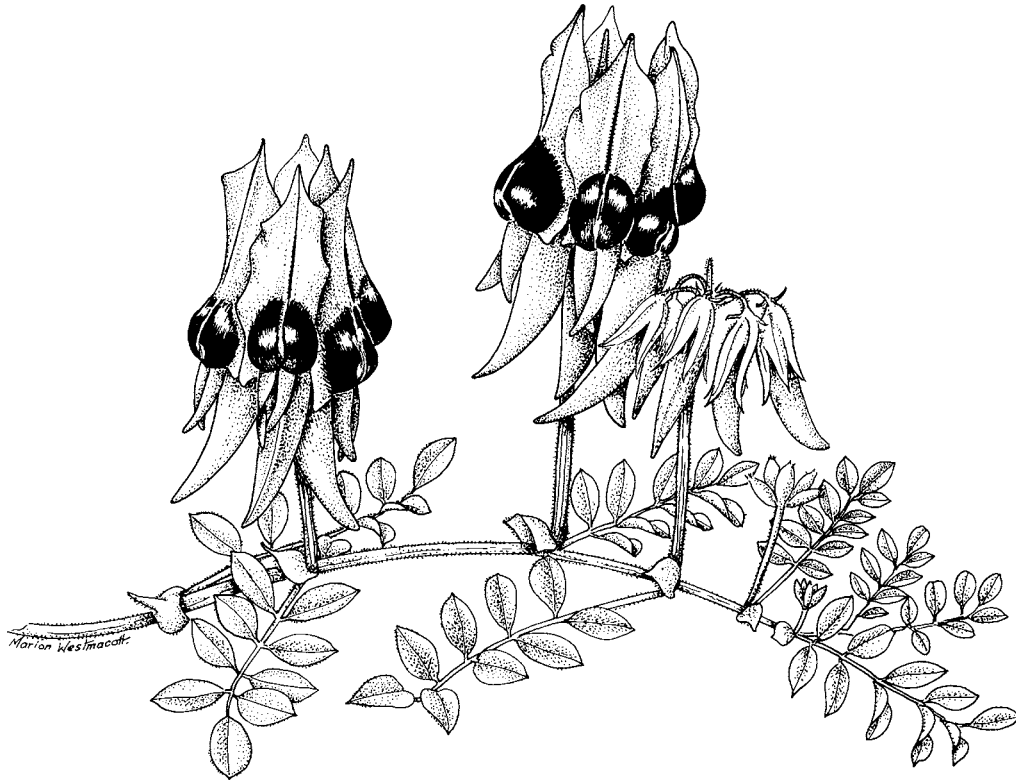


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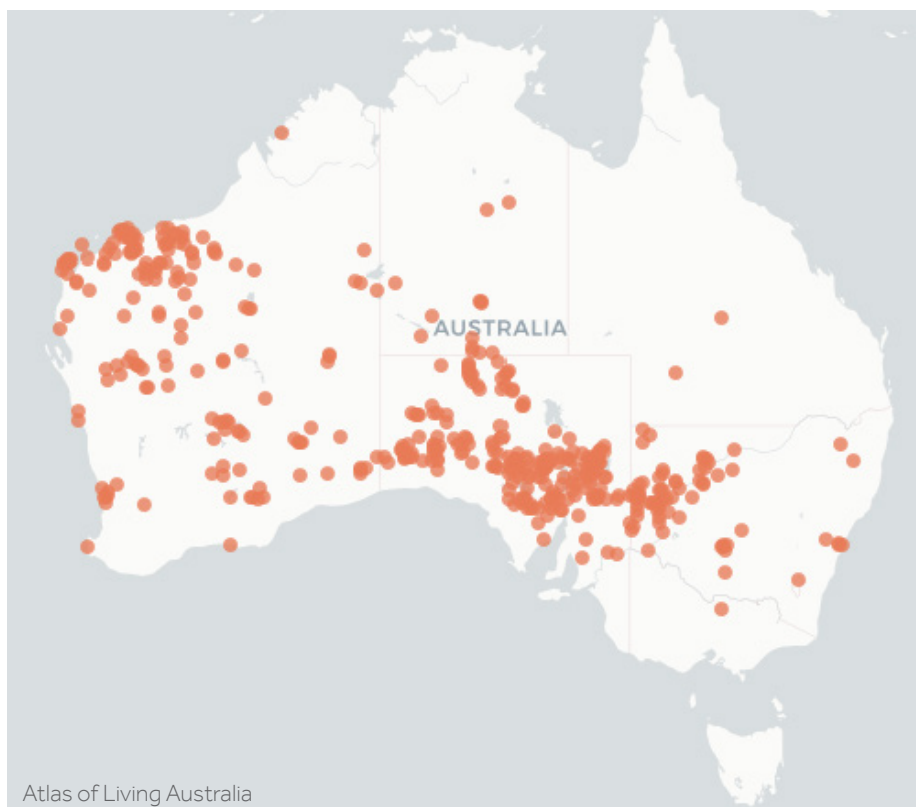


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South Australia



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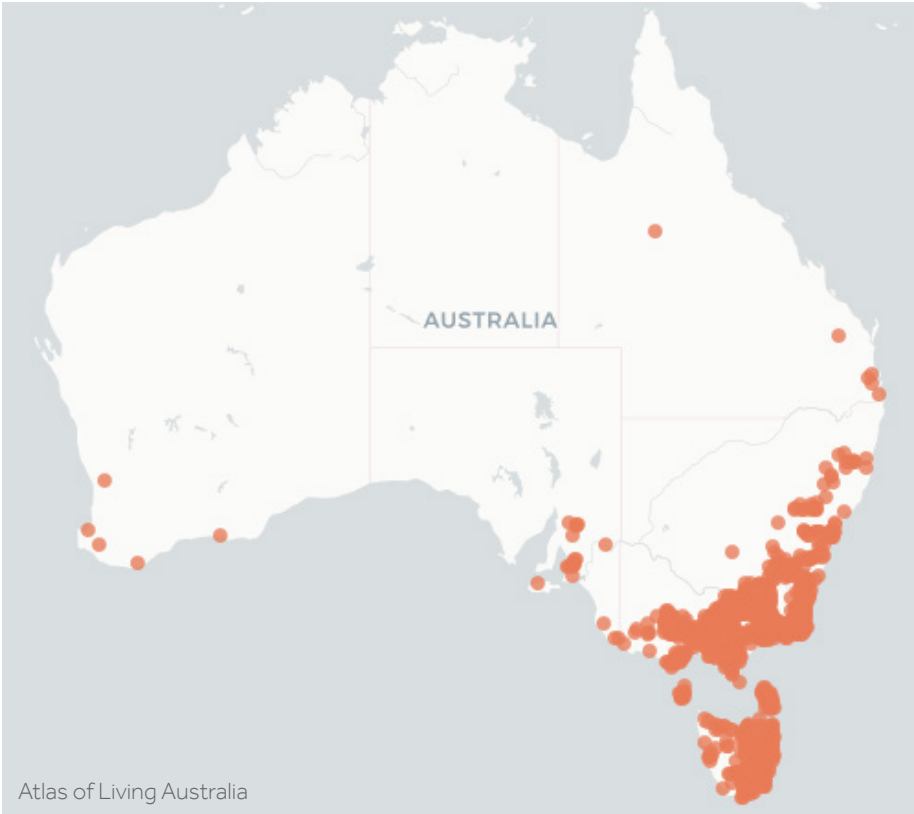


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Tasmania

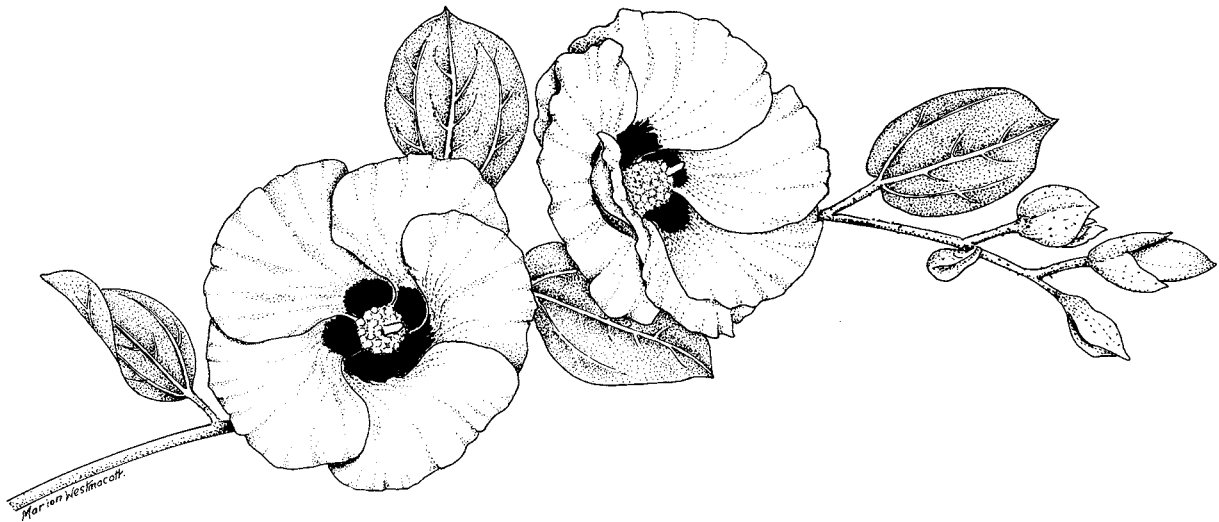


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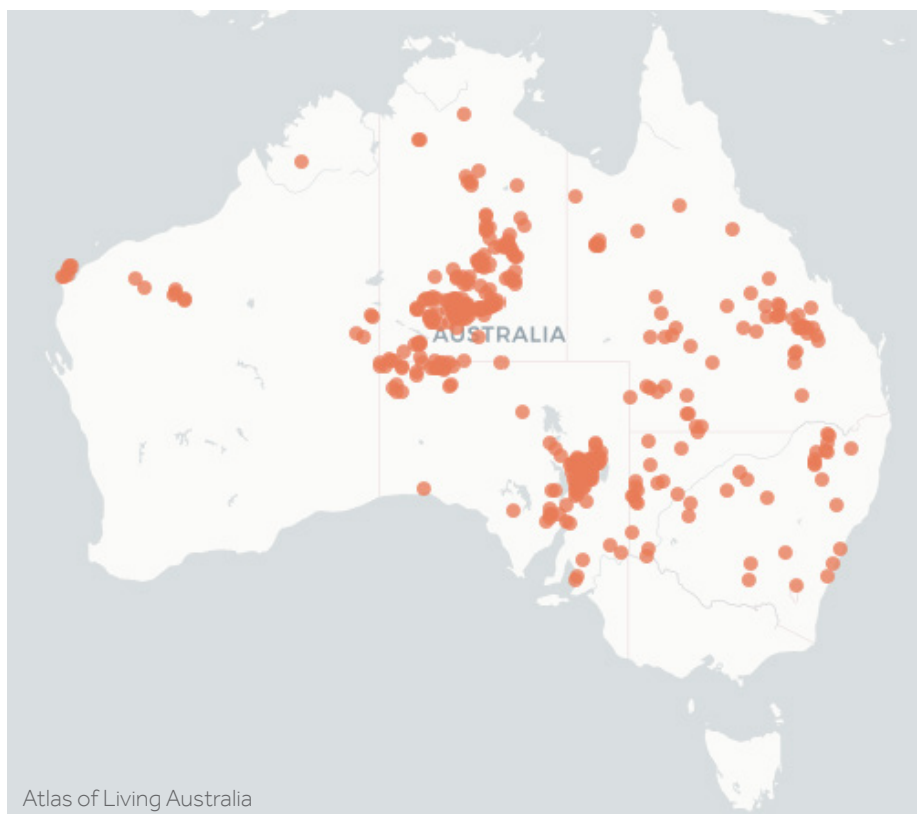


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Northern Territory



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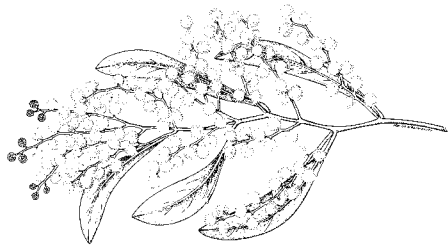
Australian Capital Territory



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Golden Wattle



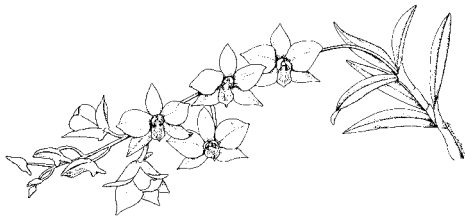
Waratah



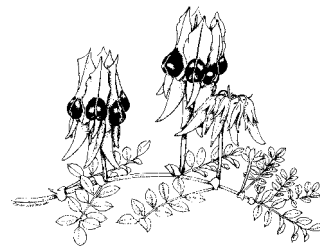
Red and Green Kangaroo Paw



Common Heath



Cooktown Orchid



Sturt's Desert Pea



Tasmanian Blue Gum

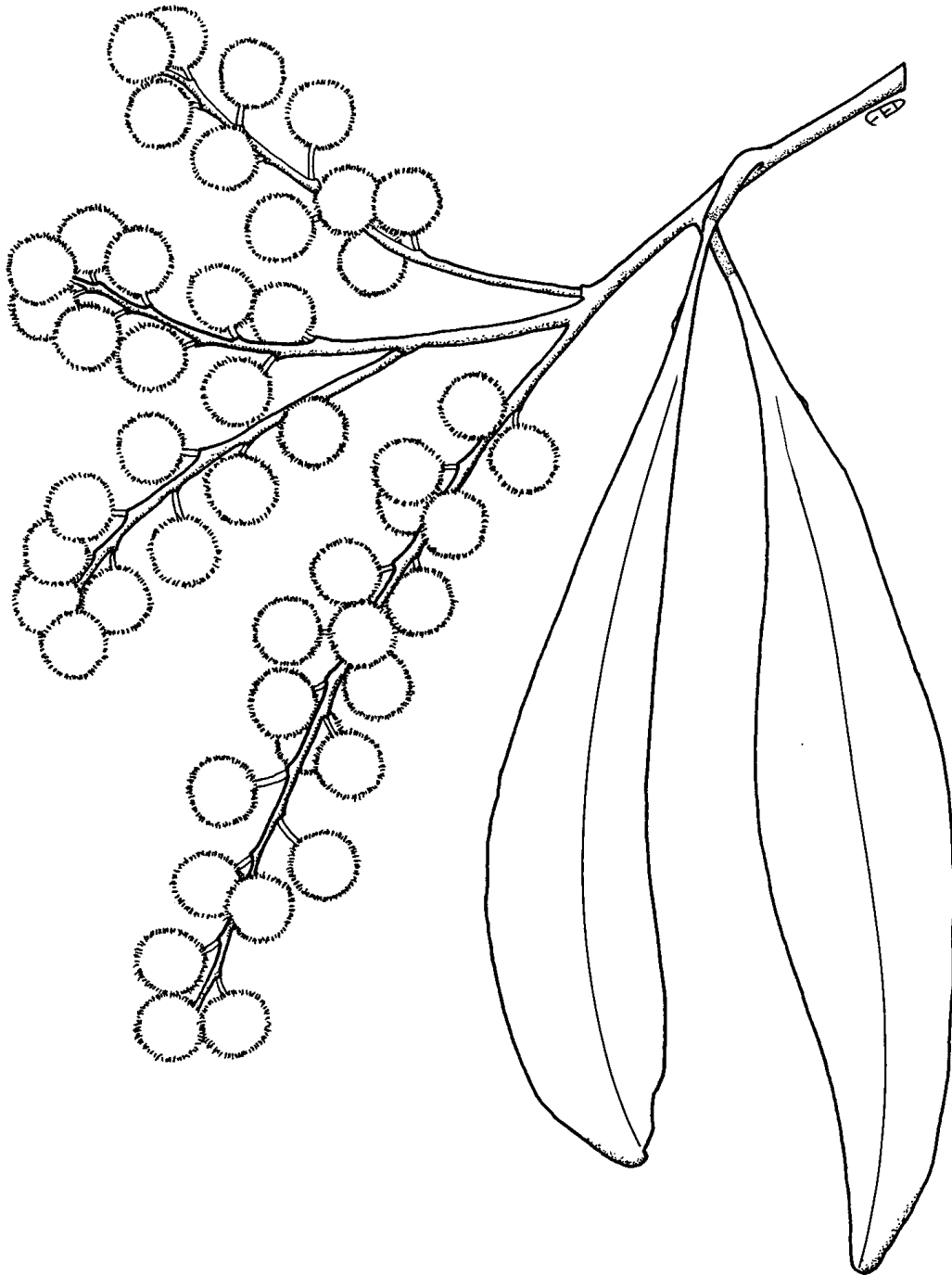


Sturt's Desert Rose



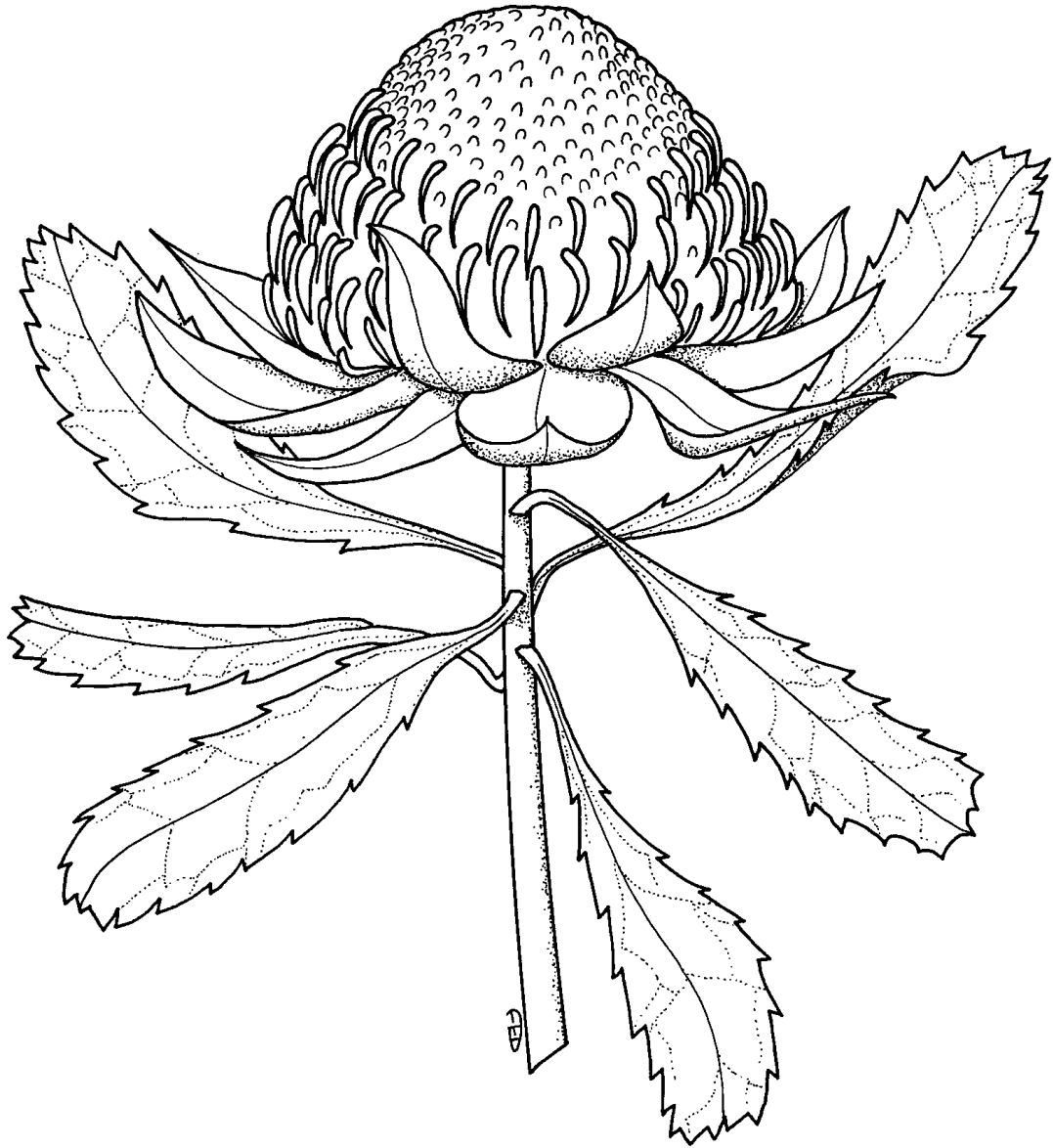
Royal Bluebell

Acacia pycnantha
Golden Wattle

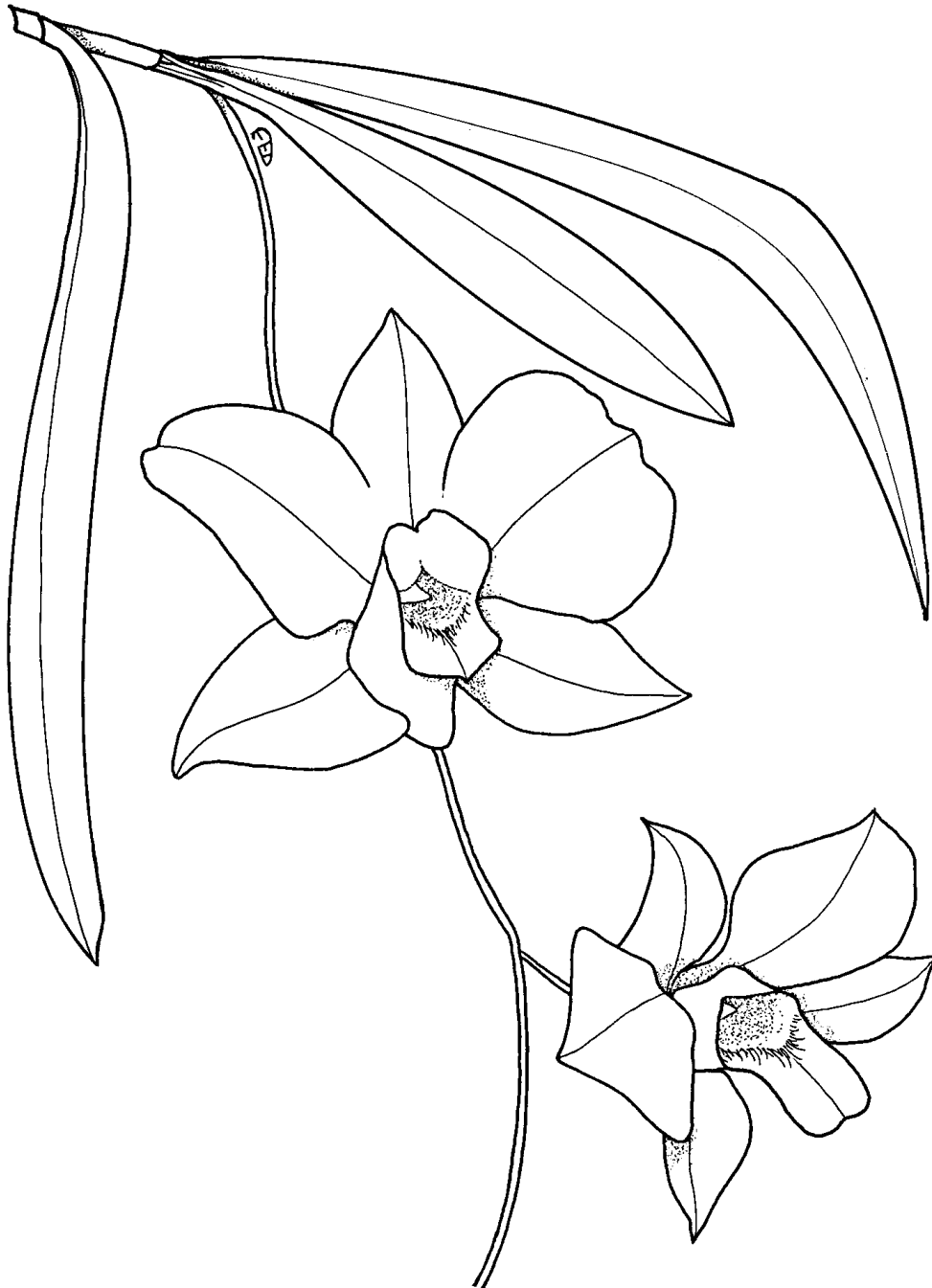


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Telopea speciosissima
Waratah

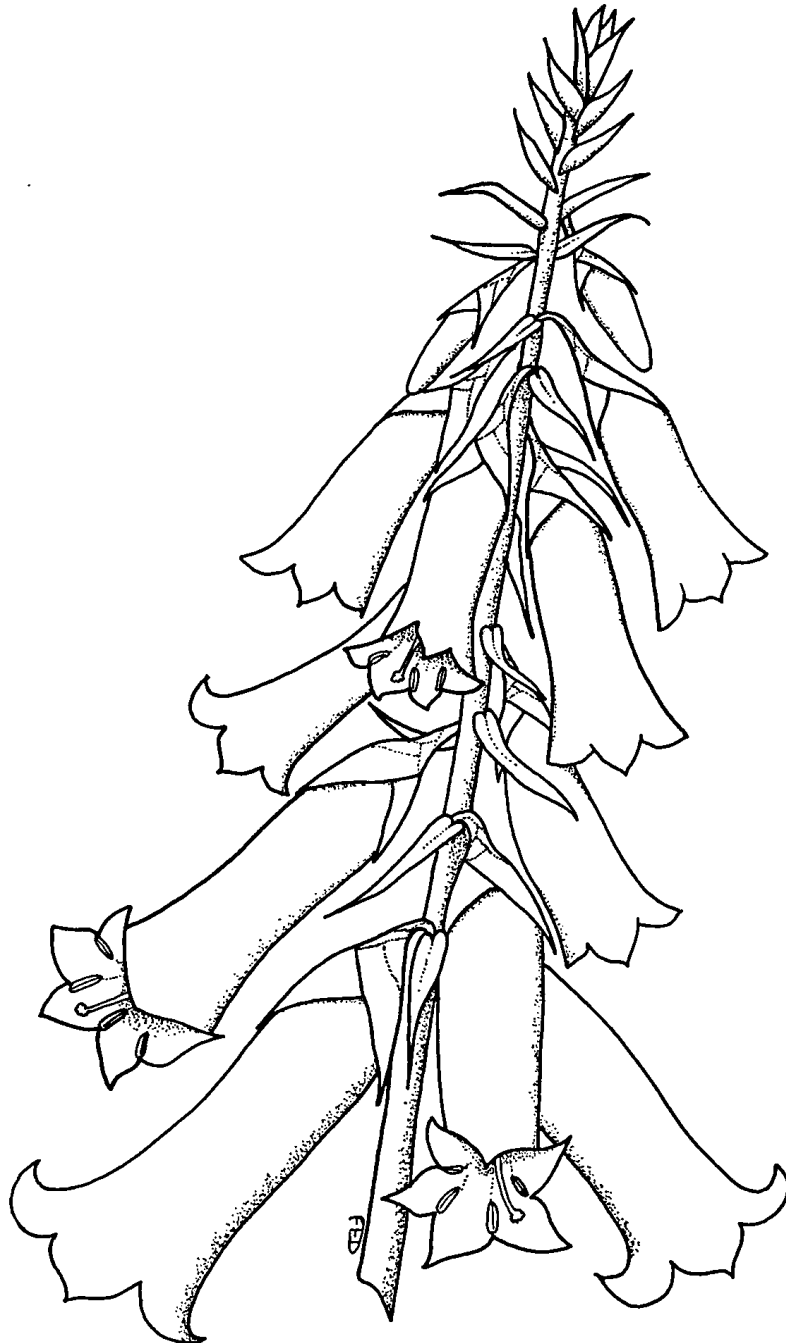


Dendrobium bigibbum
Cooktown Orchid

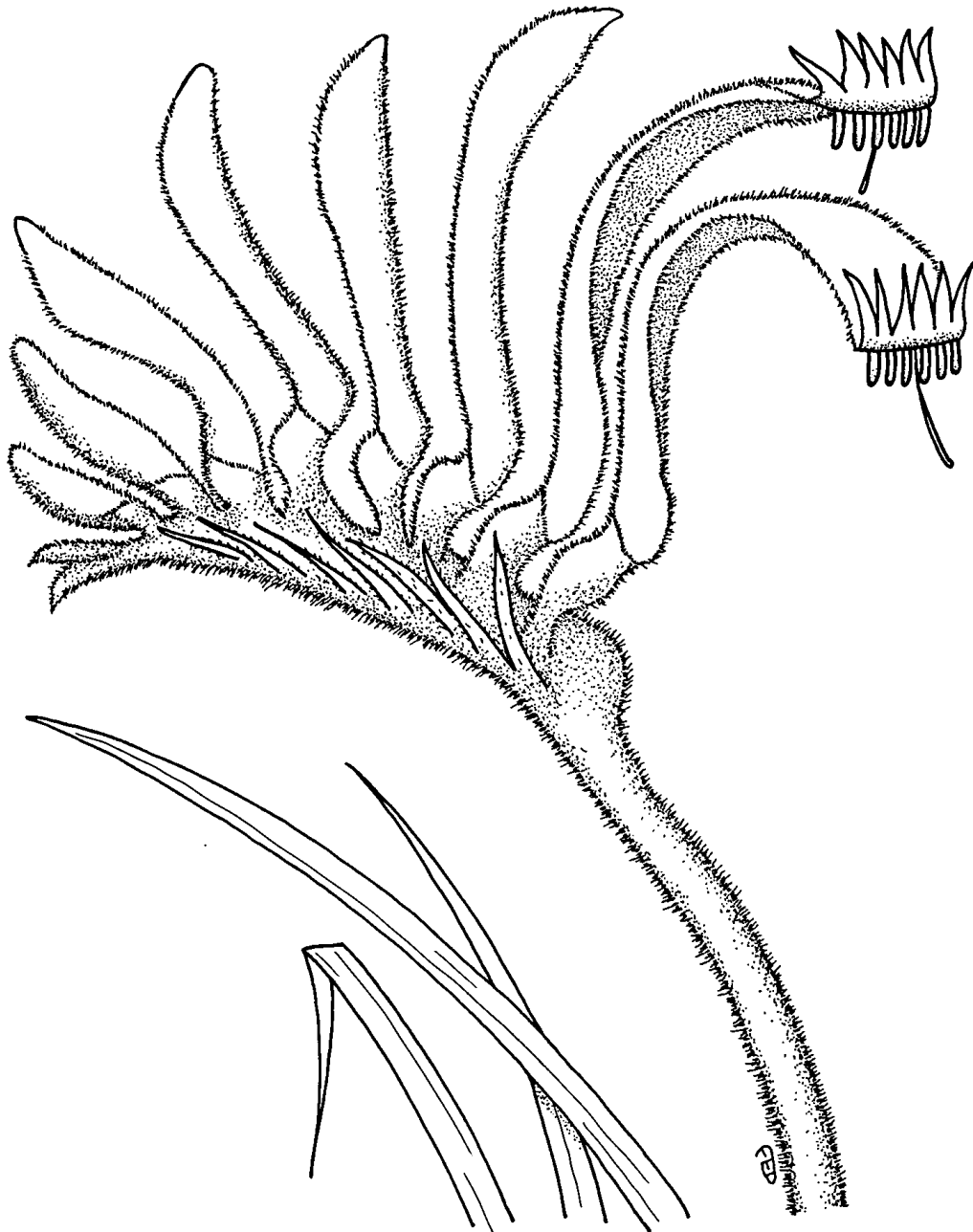


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Epacris impressa
Common Heath

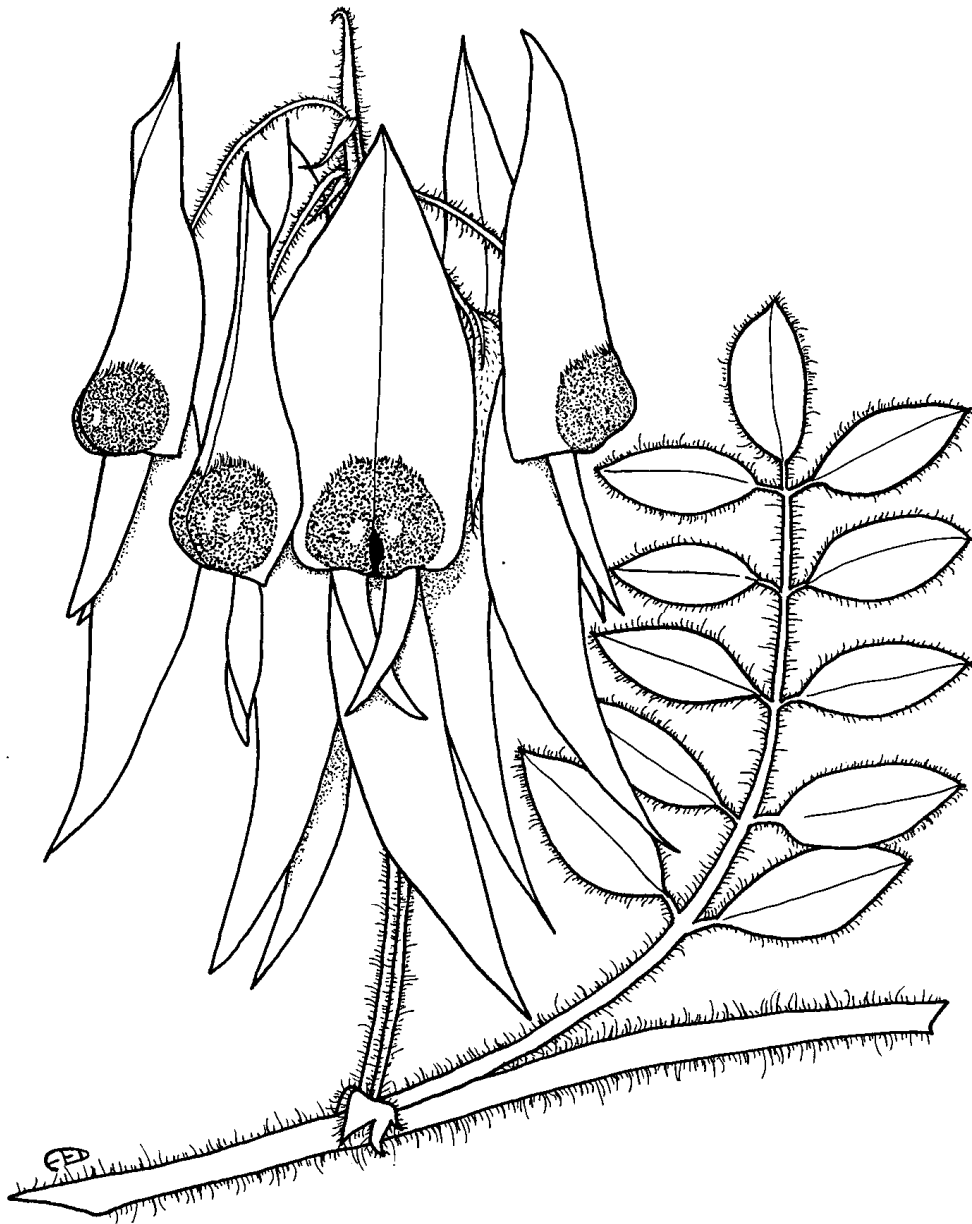


Anigozanthos manglesii
Red and Green Kangaroo Paw

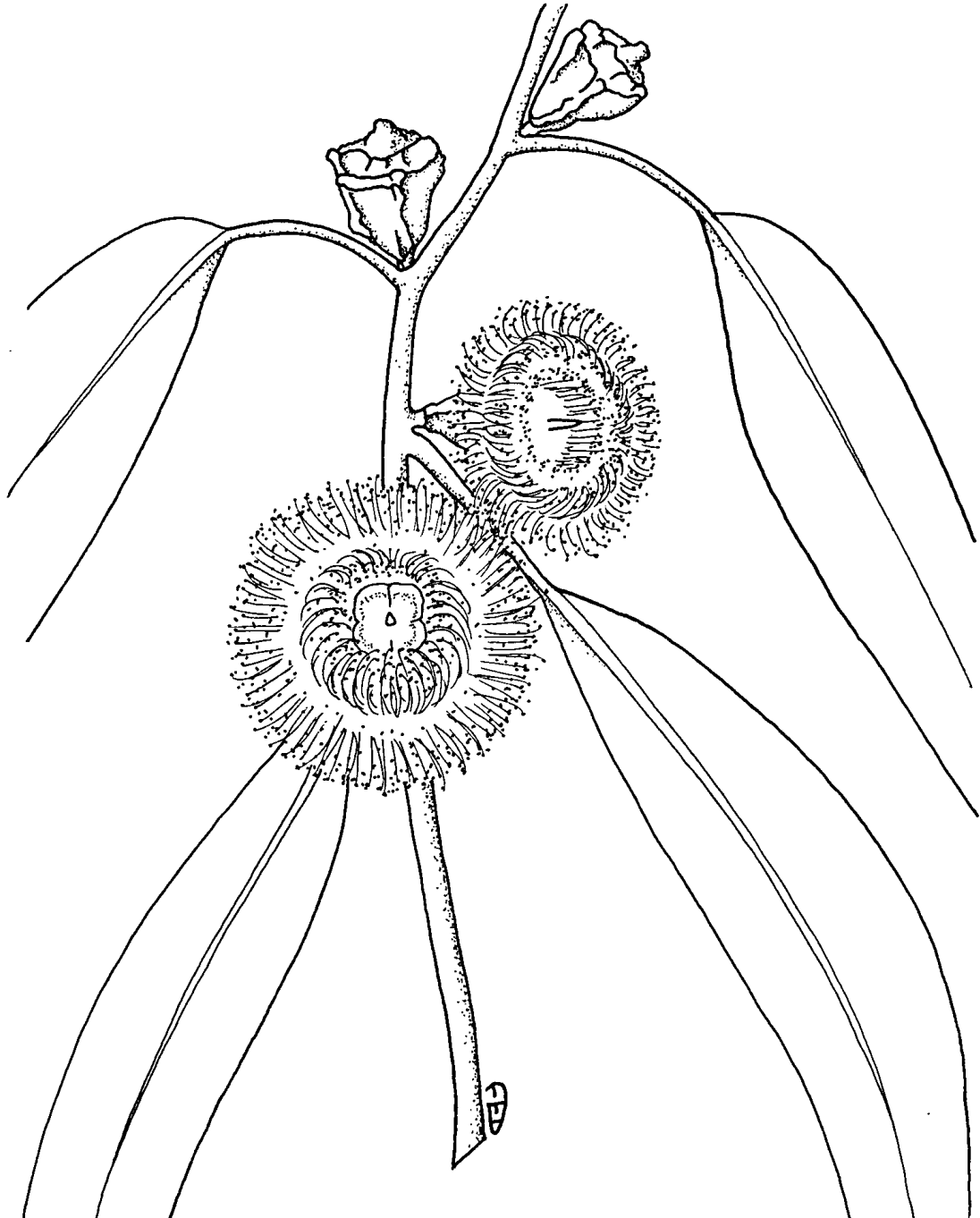


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Swainsona formosa
Sturt's Desert Pea



Eucalyptus globulus
Tasmanian Blue Gum

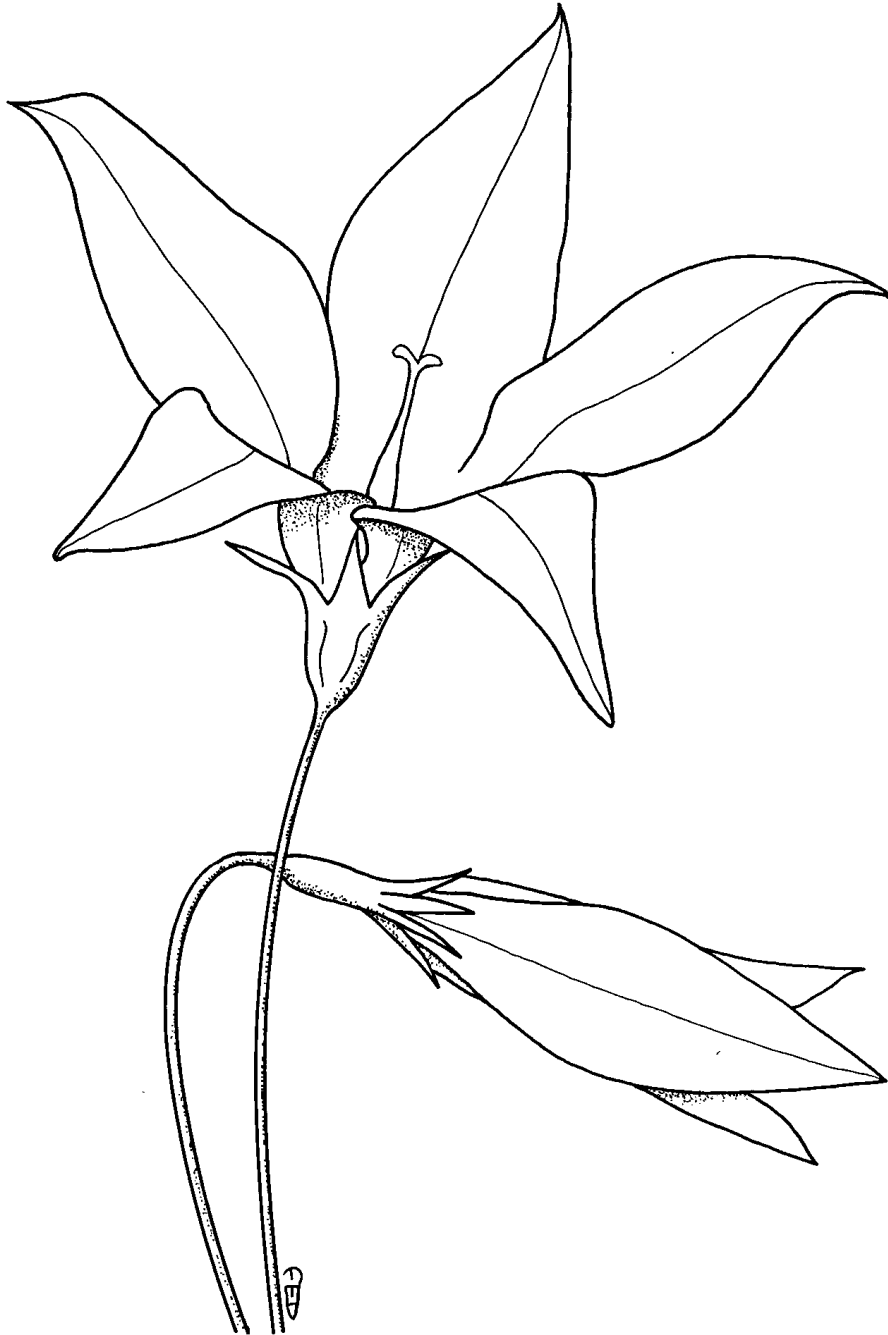


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Gossypium sturtianum
Sturt's Desert Rose



Wahlenbergia gloriosa
Royal Bluebell



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