

Shelton Fasting can save your life.

On the right of the track going up to the ridge are many Grass-Trees, Xanthorrhoea arborea which bear numerous minute flowers on tall spikes.

The major part of the main ridge of the park was completely burned in the fire of December 1976. The vegetation is regenerating well and many plants are already flowering. The Scribbly Gums, E. Haemastoma and Banksia serrata trees have thrown out new shoots from dormant buds in their trunks and branches.

Other plants have produced new growth from an underground food-storing structure. These include the Dwarf Angophora, Angophora hispida; Banksia serrata; Banksia asplenifolia; Boronia pinnata; the Native Iris, Patersonia glabrata; the blue Dotted Sun-orchid, Thelymitra ixiodes; and a very small orchid with a single leaf and mauve flower, Glossodia minor.

Plants which are not fire resistant but have profuse seed germination in the ash bed after rain include Acacias; Conesticks, Petrophile pulchella; Hakea teretifolia; Boronia ledifolia (recently flowered); a vine with a purple pea flower, Hardenbergia violacea; a pink Grevillea, G. sericea; and of particular interest Banksia ericifolia which will not flower and set seed for at least five years.

At the junction with the track to the first pylon on the ridge compare the burnt ridge top with an unburned area. The soil is thin and sandy, low in nutrients, and poor on water retention. It supports a low woodland community of scattered trees, mainly Scribbly Gums, Black She-Oaks and some Red Bloodwoods, E. gummifera, with a very dense under-storey of a variety of shrubs.



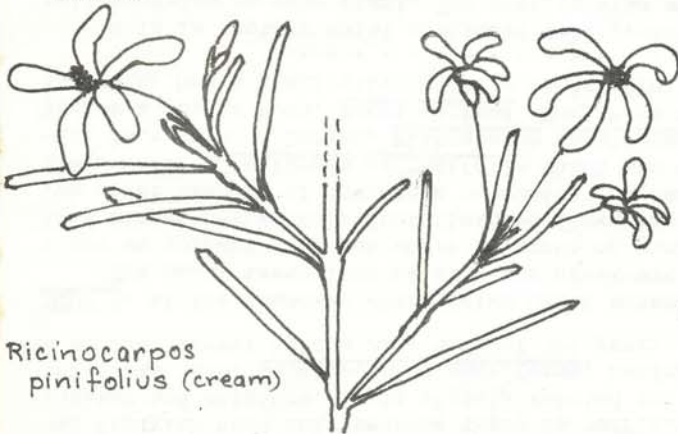
*Woolisia
pungens*
(white)



*Bossiaea
obcordata*
(yellow and red)



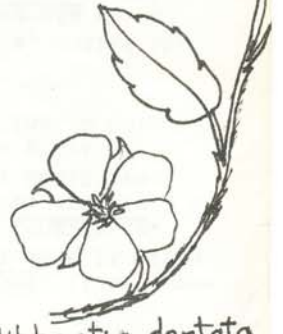
*Boronia
pinnata* (pink)



*Ricinocarpos
pinifolius* (cream)



*Epacris
microphylla* (white)



Hibbertia dentata
(yellow)

A WALK IN THE PARK

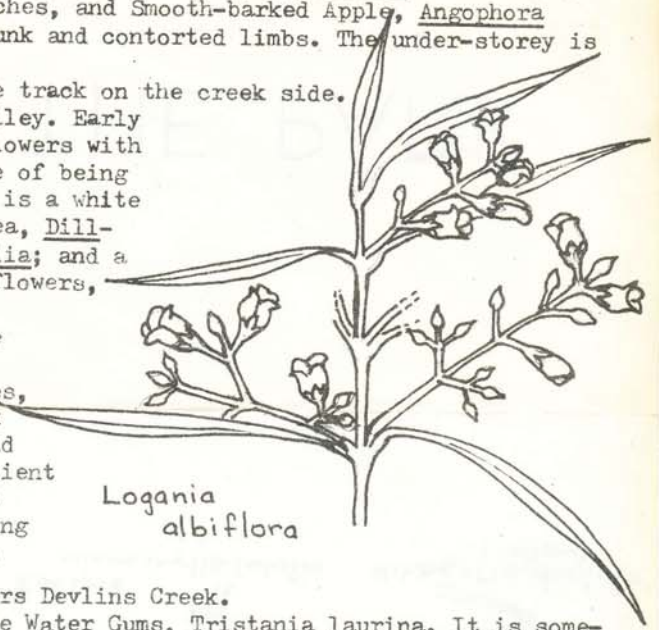
PENNANT HILLS PARK — from Day Rd., Sunday 24th Sept., at 2 p.m.

From Day Rd. picnic area follow the track along Byles Creek. This is a moist sheltered valley supporting an open forest of Sydney Peppermint, E. piperita which has a grey fibrous bark except on the smallest branches, and Smooth-barked Apple, Angophora costata with a smooth rust or purple toned trunk and contorted limbs. The under-storey is made up of a variety of flowering shrubs.

STOP 1. where a long log forms the edge of the track on the creek side.

Phebalium dentatum flourishes in this valley. Early in spring it bears masses of lemon-coloured flowers with prominent stamens which give it the appearance of being showered with tiny stars. Flowering here also is a white Grevillea, G. linearifolia; a yellow and red pea, Dillwynia retorta; "Prickly Moses", Acacia ulicifolia; and a tall slender shrub with numerous small white flowers, Logania albiflora.

On the upper, drier side of the track are Black She-Oaks, Casuarina littoralis, while lower down in the creek bed are Coachwood trees, Ceratopetalum apetalum, with broad smooth dark green leaves. This is a rain forest species and can flourish here only because there is sufficient shelter and moisture. It is closely related to Christmas Bush, Ceratopetalum gummiferum, having a similar flower at the same time of the year.



Logania
albiflora

STOP 2. at the causeway where Byles Creek enters Devlins Creek.

The small trees leaning over the creek are Water Gums, Tristania laurina. It is sometimes an upright tree but where it grows on banks which are periodically flooded it often lies almost horizontal. Just finished flowering is a Sydney Wattle, Acacia longifolia. Two other members of the creek community you can see here, but not in flower, are the Black Wattle, Callicoma serratifolia which has a serrated leaf, and another small tree with dark shining leaves, Pittosporum undulatum. Look for a white Grevillea growing beside a needle bush, Hakea sericea. They have rather similar small white flowers but the Hakea has a distinctive knobby wooden fruit.

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This is another moist sheltered valley. As you approach Ducky Waterhole, notice the tall Banksias on your right. The species with serrated leaves is Banksia serrata which has large greyish yellow brush-like flowers in summer. The other species is B. ericifolia which carries torch-like flowers of brilliant burnt orange through winter.

STOP 3. on an old track to North Epping. This site is dry but sheltered.

Three peas are in flower here - Dillwynia retorta, Phyllota phyllicoides which has yellow flowers clustered at the ends of branches and Gompholobium glabratum, a low shrub with larger single flowers of yellowish green. Here also is a red Grevillea, G. speciosa; a shrub with wiry branches bearing small white bearded flowers, Leucopogon ericoides; and a slender shrub with heads of white flowers tinged with pink, Calytrix tetragona.

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While walking along the track look for the first Blackbutts, E. pilularis - a tall tree with a long straight trunk, smooth and pale on the upper part and branches but covered with rough fibrous bark on the lower part. With magnificent angophora they are the dominant trees in this tall forest community. Growing with them on the alluvial soil of the valley are some Turpentine, Syncarpia glomulifera - a tree with furrowed stringy bark and grey green foliage, and in the shelter of the northern cliff line, a line of tall Coachwoods. Often there is a ground cover of ferns.



Leucopogon
ericoides

Calytrix
tetragona

STOP 4. at Whale Rock near the junction with an access track from Boundary Rd., North Epping.

The basic rock in the park is Hawkesbury Sandstone composed chiefly of quartz rich sandstone containing some layers of shale. The streams have cut down deeply through the joints in the sandstone. Shale layers being softer are eroded more quickly. A narrow band of shale can be seen in the bank on the right of the track.

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Approaching the last of the creek crossings you will see that the southern side of the valley is steeper here and on this moist site the Pouched Coral Fern, Gleichenia dicarpa grows thickly with a spreading pink flowered shrub Bauera rubioides. On the wet soil look for the small insectivorous Sundew, Drosera spathulata. The spoon shaped leaves, covered with red hairs, form a rosette.