

Wednesday, 24 April 2019 - Walk to Big Badja

Wednesday's Walk included an epic drive to Badja Fire Trail in Deua National Park, 117km from Spotlight in Queanbeyan via Captains Flat. We nearly missed the start of the trail due to a lack of signage but saw a propped up post signalling we had reached Pike's Saddle and, having previously read Ros's notes, we realised where we were meant to go. A U-turn followed by a false start and then we were off. The track is relatively flat, being located on a ridge trail until the climb to the trig on top of Big Badja Mountain. The views are astounding and worth the almost 6km round trip.

Eucalypts are a notable feature of this walk, with mostly mixed stands but occasionally one species would dominate. We were able to clearly note the differences between *E. pauciflora* (white and grey trunked with minor scribbles and thick leaves) and *E. fraxinoides* (tall, variable bark as a collar, many scribbles and a yellowish hue) but may need more consideration when differentiating between *E. fastigata* and *E. sieberi* (the trees in question were very tall without buds, fruit or flowers within reach and juveniles were sparse). *E. dalrympleana* and *E. radiata* were also noted, as was a mallee eucalypt (unidentified) on the top of the mountain. We will need to carry better identification texts next time.

Also discussed were similarities and differences between *Acrothamnus hookeri* (in bud) and *Monotoca scorparia* (flowering) while much admired were the rounded mounds of *Actrotriche divaricata*, the flowering *Grevillea oxyantha*, the buds and flowers on *Epacris robusta*, the warty leaves of *Boronia algida* and the many brightly coloured fungi.

It appears that *Prostanthera phyllicifolia* and *P. lasianthos* populations have crashed as despite a dedicated search these were not observed. Hopefully these species will re-emerge with better seasons and favourable management.





Yes Jo. We came from over there.



We made it



Unidentified mallee



Epacris robusta



Purple fungi



Fungi cluster

Images by Kris Nash from top left to bottom right:
Unidentified mallee Mounded *Actrotriche divaricata*
Giant *E. fraxinoides*
Grevillea oxyantha We made it