

## Wednesday Walk, 1 May 2019 – Mundoonen Nature Reserve

We set out expecting a few showers which would have been very welcome for the parched vegetation but it was not to be, and on the whole our walk led us through very dry and dusty woodland with little healthy understorey.

Nevertheless, there are always compensation. We were constantly surrounded by a wide variety of eucalypts, first mainly *Eucalyptus rossii*, *E macrorhyncha* and *E nortonii*, and later *E mannifera* and *E dives*. It was only when we had returned to our cars that we also noticed the bluish-grey foliage of a patch of *E cinerea* across the the highway. The trees, sometimes in quite dense stands so we could observe and compare the different bark patterns, were certainly one of the outstanding features on the day. Quite a few, particularly the *E rossii*, were old multi-trunked and had obviously experienced many trials.

We chose not to go down to the dam but uphill towards Margules Trig by first taking the track but then following the ridgeline to the top (it did include some 'undulations'). The paucity of the understorey was underlined by even the *Rytidosperma pallidum* looking thirsty and dusty. We did encounter some *Daviesia leptophylla*, small *Melichrus urceolatus* just budding up, *Monotoca scoparia*, scattered *Hovea heterophylla* and ground-hugging *Persoonia chamaepeuce* and *Goodenia hederacea* ssp *alpestre*. There was much discussion on low-growing *Kunzea ericoides* that some walker had thought looked much more like *Leptospermum* multicaulis – always room to improve our botanical knowledge....

The last uphill effort rewarded us with a view towards Gunning, and the more energetic members of the group managed to put the trig sign back into its upright position. It must have fallen over some time ago. Just a little below the peak we admired a patch of large *Xanthorrhoea glauca* ssp *angustifolia* on the steep slope. We had seen a few quite low down but none since.

Choosing to walk more or less downhill in a straight line we met the gully that led us out towards the dam. You might have called it bush bashing if there had been some 'bush'. It was rather steep and rocky with lots of dry branches but we all managed it. The dam was in surprisingly good condition surrounded by an open area with slightly different vegetation. There were some lovely lush and healthy looking *Eucalyptus mannifera*, both *Cassinia aculeata* (one only) and tiny *C arcuata* in the immediate surroundings.

After our lunch we continued walking along the track that more or less is parallel to the highway – the traffic noise made getting lost an impossibility. Very close to the end of the walk one very observant and eagle-eyed walker spied the biggest botanical surprise for the day. A tiny *Eriochilus cucullatus* (Parsons Band) in flower. What an unexpected little treasure!

The lack of flowers also gave us the opportunity to keep our eyes open for other interesting features along the way: bull ants, a weird bunch of grass (chewed by a swamp wallaby), comparing juvenile and adult leaves, tree trunks and barks, and large trunks that had lost their bark up one side but happily continuing growing from the other side where they had retained their bark. Another mysterious find that none of us had seen before turned out to be perfectly round dark brown balls of resin that must have oozed from the trunks of the grasstrees and hardened in a fire.



*Grevillea lanigera*



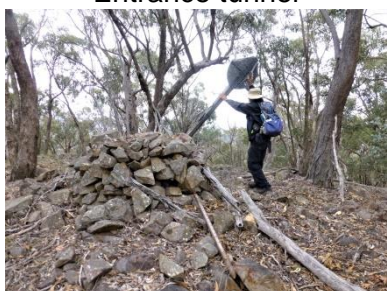
Entrance tunnel



Grandpa Rossii



Treasures in nature



Margules Trig being restored



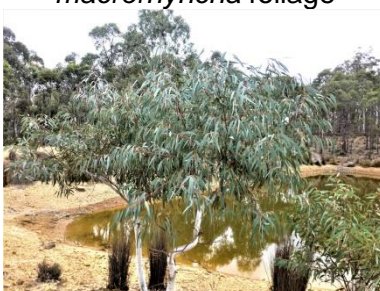
juvenile *Eucalyptus macrorhyncha* foliage



Finally lunch at the dam



*Melichrus urceolatus*



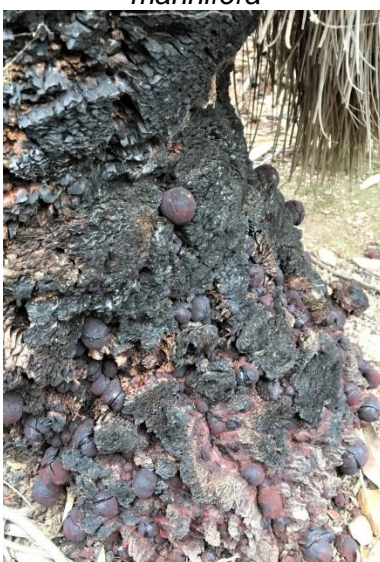
Juvenile *Eucalyptus mannifera*



*Eriochilus cucullatus*



*Xanthorrhoea glauca* ssp  
*angustifolia* with resin balls



Burnt trunk with resin balls



*Eucalyptus mannifera*