

Traditional Noongar Knowledge of Endangered Flora

Noongar name	Scientific name	Common name	Traditional uses
Balga	<i>Xanthorrhoea preissii</i>	Grass tree	The fronds of the Grass tree can be used to cover the roof of a shelter. The Grass Tree also produces a resin that can be used as a tanning and binding agent. The resin combined with kangaroo droppings and charcoal produce a binding agent to bind objects together such as stone spearheads onto spear shafts. ¹ ~
Bayoo Jeeriji	<i>Macrozamia riedlei</i>	Zamia seed Zamia palm	The seed pod of the Zamia was eaten, however it is toxic. Noongars would soak the pods in running water to leach out toxins. The orange flesh outside the seed was eaten or crushed to make a porridge-like meal and then formed into cakes. ¹ ~
Biara**	<i>Banksia attenuata</i>	Candle Banksia	The Biara flowers are a source of nectar and used to make a sweet honey drink. The cones were used as a torch to carry fire from camp to camp. ¹ The tip of the stem bud was chewed like chewing gum (often mixed with petals from the Yellow Buttercup) and acted as a hunger suppressant for long journeys. ~
Janda	<i>Hakea prostrata</i>	Hakea	The nectar is sucked directly from the Janda flowers or the blossoms are soaked in water to produce a sweet honey drink. Sometimes the drink is allowed to ferment to produce intoxicating liquor. ~
Jarrah	<i>Eucalyptus marginata</i>	Jarrah	The wood from the Jarrah is used to make tools, such as spears and digging sticks. The bark from the Jarrah was soaked in water to make a dye. ¹

Perth Region NRM is greatly appreciative of the Noongar community for sharing their traditional ecological knowledge.

*Bennett, E M 1991, Common and Aboriginal Names of Western Australian Plant Species, Wildflower Association of Western Australia, Perth.

** Daw B, Walley T, & Keighery G. (1997)

***Chadwick, R 1993, English to Noongar vocabulary

1: City of Joondalup – Plants and People in Mooro Country, Nyungar plant use in Yellagonga Regional Park)

The word Noongar means 'person of the south-west'. There are several ways of pronouncing it, including: Noongar, Nyungar, Nyoongar, Nyoongah, Nyungah, Nyugah, Yungar, and Noonga. For more information, go to <http://www.noongarculture.org.au/language>.



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Kara	<i>Caladenia arenicola</i>	Spider Orchid	The roots were baked or roasted and eaten. The roots were also made into a paste for cakes. ¹ ~
Kondil*	<i>Allocasuarina fraseriana</i>	Franzer's Sheoak	When the Kondil leaves turn brown, Aboriginal people would walk towards the rivers and waters knowing that the fish are running. ~
Kurulbrang*	<i>Anigozanthos manglesii</i>	Mangles Kangaroo Paw	The roots of the Kurulbrang contain high levels of stored starch and were eaten by the Noongar people. ¹ ~
Marri	<i>Corymbia calophylla</i>	Red Gum	The marri was known as the great medicine tree because the resin acted as an antiseptic and was used in treating gum infections, numbing teeth and reducing discomfort. It could also be diluted in water and drunk as a treatment for upset stomachs. ~
Mungitch	<i>Banksia grandis</i>	Bull Banksia	The mungitch cones were used as torches by Noongars. These torches would be used to transport fire and the smoldering cones were also kept under their cloaks to keep them warm. ¹ ~
Pondil***	<i>Kunzea glabrescens</i>	Spearwood	Spearwood was used to make spears. ¹ ~
Pungura*	<i>Banksia littoralis</i>	Swamp Banksia	The nectar from the pungura flowers was eaten or used in water to make a sweet drink. The sweet drink can also be used in the treatment of sore throats and colds. ¹

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Tuart	<i>Eucalyptus gomphocephala</i>	White Gum	The bark from the Tuart was used as roofing for Noongar mia-mias (shelters). ¹
Yawl ***	<i>Melaleuca raphiophylla</i>	Swamp Paperbark	~ Long strips of bark are used for the roofing for the mia-mias and smaller pieces can be used to carry water or to hold food.

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