



## Padthaway Orchid Track

The Orchid track takes you through a range of amazing native vegetation that has adapted to the harsh Australian environment and poor soils of this ancient sand dune system upon which this area is built.

This brochure will guide you on the Orchid track and help you understand how our native vegetation has adapted for survival. It will also provide a brief history of the area and how humans have utilised the local vegetation. The walk takes approximately 60 minutes return with the choice of extending your experience by taking the Banksia Loop (150 minutes return) or the Currawong Loop (80 minutes return) within the Padthaway Conservation Park.

As you walk, keep and eye out for numbered posts and posts marked with yellow. These posts define the walking track and numbers correspond to the information on this sheet.

1. **Limestone Spider Orchid** - *Caladenia calcicola* can be identified by its glossy pale yellow flowers with maroon stripes. The flower rises from a hairy leaf between September to November. The orchid requires deep sandy soils over limestone to flourish, this area providing the perfect substrate for this delicate plant to grow. There are only limited numbers of this orchid surviving due to threats from the local area. What would these threats be?
2. **Tracks on Sand** - Can you identify any tracks in the sand? Scientists use these tracks to gather evidence on species of animals that may pass through this area
3. **Quarry** - The quarry before you gives you the perfect soil profile of an old sand dune in which the vegetation around you has to survive.



Western Grey Kangaroo

4. **Stringy Barks** - *Eucalyptus baxteri* are well adapted to sandy soils by having a deep root system and leathery leaves to reduce moisture loss for survival.
5. **Insect eating plants** - While some plants have adapted to these low nutrient soils by developing a deep root system like the stringybarks, others have evolved alternative strategies. During winter and spring several species of sundews (*Drosera* species) inhabit this area. They gain their nutrition by trapping unwary insects with a sticky mucus on their leaves and then dissolving the bodies to absorb the nutrients.
6. **Wattle** - The dark barked wattle (Golden Wattle, *Acacia pycnantha*) is another native plant that loves the poorer sandy soils. Humans have invented many uses from this tree. These range from timber, erosion control, tanning skins and the seed has been used for bush food industry. Have you ever tasted a wattle seed muffin?
7. **Padthaway Conservation Park** - Padthaway Conservation Park was proclaimed in 1971 and conserves 984 hectares of a range of native vegetation habitats. As you wander through you may see many of the native animals including wandering echidnas looking for the odd ant to eat.



Echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*)

8. **Banksia** - *Banksia marginata* (leaves with no teeth) and *Banksia ornata* (toothed leaves) flowers during October to March providing valuable food for the local birds.
9. **Truck** - This truck belonged to Pappy Penny, a bee keeper and one of the original settlers who utilised the species of this area for honey production. The truck is a chevrolet from the early 40's and has been parked in this location for at least 40 -50 yrs.



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10. **Eucalyptus** - Eucalypts are the dominant species that form the main structure of upper canopy foliage around the Upper South East. Their flowers provide food for native bees, birds, lorikeets, mammals such as the Pygmy Possums and Sugar Gliders and a wide range of valuable insects. Keep an eye out for Koalas that may be feeding on the Eucalyptus leaves.
11. **Picnic area** - From here you can return to the Caravan Park by heading south on the Banksia loop (135 minutes), north on the Currawong loop (65 minutes). Or if you prefer follow your footprints back to the boundary of the Conservation Park and then follow the return track back to the Caravan Park by passing through more interpretive features. But first sit down, relax and listen to the many bird calls that can be heard in this area.

Kookaburra



### RETURN TRACK



Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

12. **Dodonaea** - Around this area you will notice a light green plant with sticky coating on the leaves. This plant is *Dodonaea viscosa*, otherwise known as sticky hop bush from which the seeds are much sort after by the local parrots.
13. **Old Bee Site** - Early bee keepers had a lucrative business at this site. The main source of honey was the surrounding stringybarks, banksia and gums. When these were not flowering the bees travelled up to 2 km to surrounding sources of blossom such as lucerne crops.
14. **Muntries** - Before you is a great ground cover that thrives on these poor sandy soils. Along with the wattles, humans have learnt to utilise these plants by harvesting the berries for the bush food industry. Emu also love these plants.
15. **Golf Club** - Many patches of native vegetation around the South East are too small to support a viable population of species. Areas like Padthaway Conservation Park rely heavily on the surrounding vegetation. Areas like the Golf Club provide great corridors for birds and other animals to interact.
16. **Padthaway Caravan Park** - The caravan park was established by Matt and Rosemary Roberts and opened in 1997. The park has become a popular spot for tourists who find the native garden a peaceful setting.

### MAP

