

# A stroll through Stringybark

Spring, in Belair, means an abundance of wildflowers. The Kaurna word for Spring, 'Wirltuti' is derived from 'Wirltu' or 'eagle's foot' – the constellation we call the Southern Cross - which is overhead in the night sky in October. It signalled a time to return to the plains after seeking shelter in the foothills over winter.

Let's look at plants flowering in October in Stringybark in beautiful Belair National Park



The wood and bark of the **Messmate Stringybark** (*Eucalyptus obliqua*) was used by colonial and Aboriginal people alike. This species was used as the 'type specimen' for the genus *Eucalyptus*.

**Question...**What is a 'type specimen'?  
(Inset picture courtesy SA Seedbank)



**Australian Buttercup** (*Ranunculus lappaceus*) is one of 27 SA species of this genus - it is named for 'Ranus' which is the Greek word for 'frog' reflective of the damp conditions preferred by a number of species within the genus.



**Yam Daisy / Native Yam** (*Microseris lanceolata*)  
"... for three and a half consecutive miles we traversed a fertile piece of land, literally perforated with the holes the Native had made to dig this root." and "The tract extended as far east and west as we could see..."  
Governor Grey, 1839, travelling by land after being shipwrecked in WA, near Hutt River.  
(Phillip A Clarke. 'Aboriginal People and Their Plants'. Page 38).



**Large Green-comb Spider-orchid** (*Caladenia / Arachnorchis tentaculata*).  
"All orchids have six petals, often five are most visible, modified into different shapes. A sixth (usually central) petal is called the tongue petal, highly modified in shape and colour with bumps (glands), hair, or fringes."  
(Ann Prescott. 'It's Blue With 5 Petals'. Page. XII).



**Narrow-leaved Bitter-pea** (*Daviesia leptophylla*) is one of 33 pea-flowered plants in Belair. This plant grows in a line from the Flinders Ranges to Kangaroo Island. If you are game, break a leaf and place it on your tongue to see how it got its name. (Do not do this)



**Pink Fingers Caladenia** (*Caladenia carnea*). A lovely little native orchid. The tubers of these and other orchids were eaten by Aboriginal peoples throughout temperate Australia. Orchid numbers are said to be diminishing over time due to changes in climate and ecosystem disruption. Our friend Sam is looking at this decline as part of her PhD.



**Australian Hound's-tongue** (*Cynoglossum australe*). There's a couple of interesting things about this lovely, often overlooked native. Its botanical name for one – look at the leaves! Look at the seeds, the fine hooks are perfect for hitching a ride on animals for dispersal. (Inset pic courtesy SA Seedbank)



**Dodder-laurel** (*Cassytha* sp.) - There are two species of this parasitic vine in Belair. One of many common names is 'Snotty-gobble' – in reference to the sticky, edible berries. There is another species in the arid lands which is toxic to humans and animals.

**Walk distance:** ~1.4km. A 100m section of Thelymitra Track from the dam is steep, rutted, and rocky and can be challenging in wet conditions.

**Warning:** The Adventure Loop is popular with mountain bikes – be wary of cyclists on the track.

**Allow at least:** 1 hour.

**Directions:** Park at the Waverly Lodge carpark and walk down Saddle Hill road for about 50m. Veer right onto the Adventure Loop track and follow this until you reach a 90° right hand intersection. Follow the track to the Thelymitra Dam. Stop and sit for at least five minutes at the dam and take in the beauty of this place .

Follow the track (it's steep and rocky) up the hill to Queens Jubilee Drive, turn right and walk along the road back to the carpark.



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References: Bureau of Meteorology, 'It's Blue With 5 Petals' by Ann Prescott; 'Aboriginal People and Their Plants' by Phillip A Clarke; and The SA Seedbank Website.

Guided walks from April to November on the second Tuesday of the month, repeated the following Sunday. Meet at the Green Shed near Main Oval 1:45pm for a 2pm start.



Website: <https://www.friendsofbelairpark.org.au/>  
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