

# Coastal Moonah Woodland

## What is Coastal Moonah Woodland?

Coastal Moonah Woodland is made up of trees, shrubs and understorey plants that stabilise the sand dune preventing erosion. Moonah, Coast Wirilida, Coast Tea-tree or Coast Beard-heath, or a combination of all these plants form the canopy providing shelter for important understorey plants such as Pink Fairies, Sea Celery, Bower Spinach, Kidney Weed and mosses and lichens. The Moonah trees are often twisted into unusual shapes, may range in height and live for around 300 years.

## Where can it be found?

Coastal Moonah Woodland occurs on the swales, lower slopes and upper south facing slopes of coastal alkaline dune systems which contain limestone (calcarenite). Before European settlement, these woodlands would have dominated coastal and near-coastal

environments reaching approximately five kilometres inland in some areas from Edwards Point to Aireys Inlet.

## History

Since European settlement, most of the Coastal Moonah Woodland has been cleared, with less than 10% of this plant community now remaining in fragmented stands throughout Victoria.

Coastal Moonah Woodland is now a threatened plant community listed and protected under the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

Threatened native plants found within this woodland include the endangered Coast Bitter-bush, the Rare Bitter Bush, Coast Wirilida and Trailing Coast Poa.

## What lives here?

The Woodland provides important habitat and food for many native animals. Small Bats feed on the woodland floor and in the tree canopy for food, whilst Echidna's hunt for ants. The Fiddler Beetle feeds on the nectar of the Moonah flower. Ringtail Possums build their nests in trees, with one ringtail building up to five nests in different trees. Birds eat insects, whilst native ants move Wirilida seeds around and wasps pollinate the orchids.

## Threats

The small pockets of Coastal Moonah Woodland left have been degraded by weed invasion and recreational pressures.

Bridal Creeper and Myrtle-leaf Milkwort are regarded as highly invasive weeds in Coastal Moonah Woodlands. Other significant weeds include Italian Buckthorn, Boneseed, Mirror-bush and introduced grasses.



Echidna



Bat



Fiddler Beetle



Ringtail Possum



Pink Fairies



Acacia Weevil



## Plants that characterise Coastal Moonah Woodland

The presence of three or more of the following native plants, usually within a hectare is diagnostic of Coastal Moonah Woodland.

- Herbs - Broad-leafed Early Nancy (*Wurmbea latifolia*)  
Shade Pellitory (*Parietaria debilis*)
  - Shrubs - Thyme Rice-flower (*Primelea serpyllifolia* subsp. *serpyllifolia*)
  - Trees - Coast Wirilida (*Acacia uncinifolia*)  
Moonah (*Melaleuca lanceolata* subsp. *lanceolata*)
- Other useful characteristic plants include:
- Herbs - Small-leaved Clematis (*Clematis microphylla*)  
Austral Carrot (*Daucus glochidiatius*)  
Kidney-weed (*Dichondra repens*)  
Coast Swainson-pea (*Swainsona lesserifolia*)
  - Shrubs - Coast Beard-Heath (*Leucopogon parviflorus*)  
Rare Bitter-bush (*Adriana quadripartita*)
  - Trees - Coast Tea-tree (*Leptospermum laevigatum*)



Blue Tongue Lizard



Tawny Frogmouth Family

## Coastal Moonah Woodland

### Project Partners

- Barwon Coast
- Barwon Heads Golf Club
- Bellarine Catchment Network
- Borough of Queenscliff
- Breamlea Coast Action
- City of Greater Geelong
- Department of Sustainability and Environment
- Friends of Edwards Point
- Gordon TAFE
- Parks Victoria

For a free copy of the Field Guide to Coastal Moonah Woodland, contact any of the project partners or go to [www.dse.vic.gov.au](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au)

Moonah background illustration: Rob Dott

# What is Coastal Moonah Woodland?

A rare coastal vegetation community that varies in structure and composition.



CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY



Red Spotted Jezebel



Moonah