

*Discover the diversity  
of Norfolk's plants*



PLANTS OF  
NORFOLK ISLAND  
NATIONAL PARK AND  
BOTANIC GARDEN



**Australian Government**  
**Director of National Parks**

## NORFOLK ISLAND PLANT DIVERSITY



Norfolk Island's isolation has allowed plants and animals to develop here that are found nowhere else in the world. Norfolk Island is home to around 200 native plants, including more than 40 which are only found here.

Before European settlement, subtropical rainforest covered almost the entire island. Norfolk Island National Park and Botanic Garden now contain most of the island's remaining natural areas, making them a vital refuge for conserving the island's plants and animals.

Take a look as you wander through the park and botanic garden and discover the wonders of the island's plants for yourself.



# WELCOME TO NORFOLK ISLAND NATIONAL PARK AND BOTANIC GARDEN



THE PLANTS OF  
NORFOLK ISLAND  
NATIONAL PARK AND  
BOTANIC GARDEN TELL  
THE STORY OF THE  
NATURAL SIDE  
OF NORFOLK.





Seeds and spores travelled long distances in wind and water to colonise this isolated oceanic island.

Today, Norfolk supports a diverse and unique plant community well suited to the volcanic soils and sub-tropical oceanic climate.





Take a walk along the Garden Trail in the botanic garden to see a selection of Norfolk's unique and spectacular plants.

Discover the diversity of Norfolk's plant communities. Experience the lush, cool rainforests along the Rainforest Track and Palm Glen Circuit Track, or the coastal vegetation and forests of pine and oak along the Bridle Track.

With 15 tracks to explore in the national park and botanic garden, the plant life of Norfolk is only a walk away.

# NORFOLK'S NATIVE PLANTS



**Norfolk Island pine**  
*Araucaria heterophylla*



One of Norfolk's best known symbols and common across the island, this magnificent tree can grow as tall as 60 metres. Cultivated around the world as an ornamental tree, its wood is used for construction, wood turning and crafts. The seeds are a popular food for the endangered green parrot.



**White oak**  
*Lagunaria patersonia*

This is a commonly occurring, large and spectacular tree on Norfolk Island. It can grow to more than 20 metres tall. Its pink and mauve coloured flowers fade to white with age and have a waxy texture. Watch out for the seed pods which contain sharp hairs that can irritate your skin.



**Nettle tree**  
*Boehmeria australis australis*



With sandpaper-textured leaves and a serrated leaf margin, this small, spreading tree occurs naturally within and adjacent to the national park and botanic garden. There were fewer than 50 mature trees remaining, but propagation and planting has seen the numbers and distribution increase on Norfolk. Unlike other nettle trees, this one will not sting you.



**Bastard oak**  
*Ungeria floribunda*



The abundant pink flowers give the bastard oak its Latin name *floribunda*. Growing to around 15 metres tall, it is mostly limited to isolated stands within and immediately surrounding the park. Not only is this species endemic to Norfolk Island, the *Ungeria* genus is found nowhere else in the world.



**Phillip Island hibiscus**  
*Hibiscus insularis*



While the entire wild population of this plant is confined to Phillip Island, thanks to widespread plantings it is now well distributed throughout Norfolk Island. Its beautiful flowers are cream to light green with a dark magenta centre when they first open. The flowers then redden as they age.



**Samson's sinew**  
*Milletia australis*

Samson's sinew, also known as wild wisteria, often appears as large woody coils hanging from the tops of trees. Its springtime flowers are cream-coloured, sometimes with a bluish tint. They are followed by thick bean-like velvety pods. You will find this vine throughout the botanic garden and in the south-western section of the park.



**Norfolk Island palm**  
*Rhoplostylis baueri*

Reaching 10 metres in height, its attractive bright red fruit is one of the green parrot's favourite foods. This palm is known locally as niau. Early settlers used the growing tip as a vegetable. They also used the ribs of the palm fronds for making brooms and wove the fronds into baskets.



**Sharkwood**  
*Dysoxylum bijugum*



If you smell a strong foul or garlic-like smell while walking in the park during the spring months, it is likely from this medium sized tree. Sharkwood has yellow flowers and seeds that form in capsules and are red when mature. It is found throughout the national park.



**Evergreen**  
*Alyxia gynopogon*



This shrub can grow to four metres. It has dark glossy leaves with pointy ends forming whorls around the branches. The small white flowers resemble miniature frangipanis, and its green seeds turn an attractive dark orange when ripe. It is common in shaded forest throughout the botanic garden, national park and adjacent areas.





**Forest achyranthes**  
*Achyranthes arborescens*



You can find small stands of this small tree in the gullies and occasionally on the ridges of forested areas within and surrounding the park. Once down to extremely low numbers, it has been successfully propagated back to widespread distribution around the island.



**Bloodwood**  
*Baloghia inophylla*

A blood-red sap oozes from cuts in the bark of the bloodwood. This common, low-growing tree has smooth-edged medium-large leaves which are thick and glossy. Early settlers used the sap for staining furniture, marking convicts clothing and thought it a good tonic and astringent.



**Ironwood**  
*Nestegis apetala*

This small tree, usually with wavy-edged leaves is relatively common in Norfolk's forests. Its common name alludes to its hard timber which was used for fence posts and other jobs where durability was important. Fruits are most often yellow, sometimes red or purple, and look like small olives. Birds like the fruit which helps its prolific regeneration in the native forest.



**Whitewood**  
*Celtis paniculata*

These large and spectacular trees can be identified by their white to grey trunks which are often buttressed at the base, and their leaves which generally have one side longer than the other. Clusters of green flowers can be seen in summer, after which a small round fruit is produced.



**Pepper tree**  
*Macropiper excelsum psittacorum*

Widespread on the floor of forests, the pepper tree is a shrub which grows up to three metres tall. It has distinctive round to heart-shaped, dark green leaves which are lighter underneath. Fruits are elongated, conical, fleshy, green at first and turn orange when ripe. Early settlers picked and ate the green fruits and used the spicy, ripe seeds as pepper.



**Popwood**  
*Myoporum obscurum*



These often dome-shaped small trees grow to about six metres tall in open areas of forests. Their shiny green leaves have a black tip and often black margin. Prolific, scented white flowers in summer are followed by pea-sized purple berries. Through active management, these trees are increasing in number and distribution within the park and garden.



**Norfolk Island abutilon**  
*Abutilon julianae*



This low-growing plant was considered extinct until rediscovered on Phillip Island in 1985. When the last of the goats, pigs and rabbits were removed from Phillip Island, the abutilon started recolonising. Propagation and active planting is also securing this species future on Norfolk Island.



**Norfolk treefern**  
*Cyathea brownii*



This attractive treefern is in the Guinness Book of Records as the tallest in the world, and can be found in the gullies of the national park and botanic garden. The trunk of the Norfolk treefern is much smoother than its close relative, the rough treefern. For the early settlers, the centre of the treefern stems (the heart) provided good food for livestock.



**Broad-leaved meryta**  
*Meryta latifolia*



One of Norfolk's plant success stories, this species is on the road to recovery. In the early 2000s, there were only about 20 female plants left, but with propagation and replanting the numbers have increased dramatically.

The vulnerable narrow-leaved meryta, *Meryta angustifolia*, is similar, but with narrower leaves.



**Tea-tree**  
*Dodonaea viscosa viscosa*

Also known as hopwood, this quick-growing shrub or small tree grows to five metres tall and is popular in landscaping and for windbreaks. It is common across the island. The shiny, elongated leaves contrast with the spectacular profusion of red flowers followed by crimson, winged fruits, which gradually fade to a light tan.



**Oleander**  
*Pittosporum bracteolatum*



This endemic tree grows up to seven metres tall and is now fairly common in the forest and wooded areas across the island. Its small, tulip-shaped cream flowers are followed by a spherical fruit containing numerous seeds in a sticky orange pulp. Look for the blackish coloured trunk and long light green leaves.



**Devil's guts**  
*Capparis nobilis*



Also known as *wait a while*, this woody climber earns its colourful name from the sharp backward-bending thorns on its stems which can easily cut your skin. Tufts of large white stamens two to three centimetres long are a striking feature of the plant's large white flowers in spring and summer.



**King fern**  
*Marattia salicina*



The fronds of this large, robust fern can reach lengths of three to six metres. A few years ago there were less than 250 plants left in the wild. Although found mostly in the moist valleys of the national park, there are also a few specimens in the botanic garden.



**Cordyline**  
*Cordyline obtecta*

This palm-like tree, known locally as *ti* grows up to 10 metres tall and occurs throughout forested areas of Norfolk. Look for the large narrow leaves clustered at the end of branches, the grape-like sprays of white flowers or currant like seeds in the warmer months. Green parrots often use hollows in old cordylines for nesting.



**Flax**  
*Phormium tenax*

You can often see this tufted, broad-leaved, grass-like herb on exposed cliff faces around Norfolk and Phillip Islands. Captain Cook, on discovering Norfolk Island, thought that the flax could be used to make sails, and the Norfolk pine for masts. It was one of the reasons that convicts were sent to settle on Norfolk Island.



**Sia's backbone**  
*Streblus pendulinus*



The name of this tree is reputed to refer to the pliability and toughness of the wood. Common to forested areas across the island, its leaves have sandpaper-like texture. This plant is responding well to broad-scale woody weed control in the national park with many seedlings spontaneously occurring in treated areas.



**Norfolk Island euphorbia**  
*Euphorbia norfolkiana*



This highly endangered shrub typically reaches one to three metres tall. It generally grows in lightly shaded areas on coastal cliffs, but it has also been grown successfully in the botanic garden and in the national park. Its whorled elongate leaves make this an attractive and distinctive uniquely Norfolk plant.



**Big creeper**  
*Melodinus baueri*



As its common name suggests this is one of Norfolk's large climbing vines. Unlike other vines, the leaves each have about 50 parallel veins on both sides of the mid-rib. It has spectacular cream coloured flowers, large grey-green fruit and is common within and immediately surrounding the national park.



**Norfolk Island forkfern/ Hanging forkfern**  
*Tmesipteris norfolkensis*



Epiphytes are plants that grow on other plants. Look at the trunks of the tall tree ferns, particularly in the botanic garden, to spot this epiphytic plant. Each of its branches are 10-25 centimetres long and support many one to two centimetre leaf-like appendages.



**Beech**  
*Myrsine ralstoniae*



Common throughout Norfolk, this small understorey tree with dark glossy leaves grows to around six metres tall. It is one of the few species that can withstand the suppressive effects of African olive – a widespread woody weed on Norfolk Island.



# SYMBOL LEGEND



**CRITICALLY  
ENDANGERED**

These species have an extremely high risk of becoming extinct due to their very small population size or very limited distribution.



**ENDANGERED**

These species have a high risk of becoming extinct and require special management to secure their future.



**VULNERABLE**

These species are likely to become endangered if the threats to their survival or reproduction are not reduced or removed.



**ENDEMIC**

Occur naturally on Norfolk Island and nowhere else in the world.

**For a complete Norfolk Island National Park plant checklist, please visit: [environment.gov.au/parks/norfolk](https://environment.gov.au/parks/norfolk)**

## FOR YOUR SAFETY

- please wear sturdy footwear bare feet, thongs or high heels are not recommended
- take extra care after rain because the tracks may become slippery
- some tracks may be uneven with protruding tree roots, or have numerous steps please watch your step and use handrails where provided
- do not use mountain bikes, cars, quad-bikes or motor bikes on walking tracks (Park Service and emergency vehicles are permitted)
- slip, slop, slap! protect yourself from the sun
- please stay away from cliff edges

## PLEASE REMEMBER

- stay on the tracks to avoid damaging plants and causing erosion
- all plants, animals, timber and soil are protected throughout the park. Please do not disturb or take them
- please take your rubbish with you when you leave the park
- feeding the birds or leaving food scraps around helps the introduced birds and rodents please don't feed the wildlife

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[environment.gov.au/parks/norfolk](http://environment.gov.au/parks/norfolk)



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