

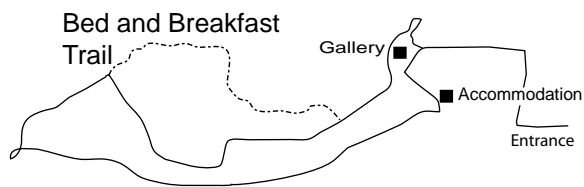
Nature's ecosystems are co-dependent - a single tree can be host to a variety of animals and other plants. In some cases the relationship is mutually beneficial, in others not so comfortable, depending on the individual's position in the food chain. With luck and a good season there is plenty to go around, and there is no waste - someone always cleans up every last scrap.

Much goes on that mere humans may be unaware of, for instance certain plants provide specialised food for the larvae of a particular insect, and in turn these larvae act as a rich source of food for birds, spiders, insect predators and parasites such as certain species of fly and wasp.

What evidence of animals can you see as you walk this trail? Loose bark creates cosy hidey holes - hollow logs and trunks also make good lodgings. Saplings and branches give spiders convenient anchor points for their webs. Notice the lumps or galls on some tree trunks, do you know what causes them?

As you walk, listen and look for birds. What else can you hear, a cicada perhaps? Check out the ant nests, spider webs and signs of other animals feeding, building or moving. Kangaroos and wallabies use the trails and camp under trees during the day.

Trail location



Myall Park Botanic Garden is owned and managed by a Board of honorary Directors.

Would you like to help us? Telephone 07 4665 6705
www.myallparkbotanicgarden.org.au



Myall Park Botanic Garden's lists of birds, mammals, insects, amphibians and reptiles are available from the Gallery.

Note your sightings here:

Do the Right Thing

Help us preserve the Garden please

- * All plant material belongs to the Garden - seeds, flowers, nuts, caps, cuttings. Unauthorised removal will result in prosecution.
- * Vehicles keep to the Loop Road and car-parks.
- * NO smoking, open fires or barbecues. Fire danger is HIGH.
- * Take out what you have brought in. There is no rubbish collection.

This trail is maintained by volunteers for your continued pleasure.

Funded by National Heritage Trust

Bed & Breakfast Trail

A natural forest bushwalk focusing on fauna

Use all your senses to discover the animals that live here - what are they up to? Sleeping, eating, dating, mating or hard at work? Watch for evidence of Nature's thriving bed and breakfast industry.

What you see, hear, smell and feel varies with climatic conditions as well as the calendar.

Follow the cleared pathway, cairns and coloured ties

1. *Angophora leiocarpa*

Known to some as 'rusty gum', the old angophora with its beautiful stained colours provides local fauna with protective mulch and a convenient hollow for shelter. Animals such as birds, goannas and skinks love scratching in this mulch which builds up annually.

2. Treasure Trove

Search for bright jewelled beetles and painted butterflies, golden threads spun by the Golden Orb Weaver Spider, and make sure you sight the spiky little Jewel Spider. These spiders won't harm you, but they may have strung their sticky webs across your pathway to trap unwary insects.

3. Leaf Litter

The rocky terrain here ensures good water run-off. Debris creates deep pockets of soil, an ideal habitat for many small animals and insects as well as moisture loving mat-rushes (*Lomandra* species). The whole mat-rush plant is edible, and flowers are rich in a heavy smelling nectar which attracts pollinating beetles.

4. Highways and byways

Many tracks are evident, especially after rainfall, broadcasting who's been using or crossing the path. Scats or piles of dung also act as indicators of who lives around here and marks out their territory. Wallabies and kangaroos go to and fro every day, and echidnas are especially mobile in July and August as they search for mates. What other signs can you observe?

5. Black & White Beauty

Walk between two imposing angophoras with lots of loose, crunchy mulch underneath. Straight ahead is an unusual narrow-leaf iron bark (*Eucalyptus crebra*). Usually a single stemmed tree, this specimen divides at the base into seven separate trunks. Can you guess why? The base of the tree is littered with contrasting chunky white rocks. A black orchid (*Cymbidium canaliculatum*) nestles here. How many can you find on this trail - are they always found in the same trees? They are not parasites but epiphytes, taking nourishment from leaf litter and other air-borne offerings. Stems were eaten by Aborigines who also used the sap as an adhesive for bark painting.

6. Bull Oak or Belah?

Both bull oak (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*) and belah (*Casuarina cristata*) belong to the Casuarinaceae family. Both have long needle-like "leaves" which are actually green branchlets with rings of tiny scale-like leaves. (If you have binoculars, try using them upside down as a hand lens). Generally, belah "needles" hang down, while on the bull oak they tend to curve upwards. Both trees produce male and female flowers on separate plants. Look for cones under female trees – round, spiky and about 2 cm diameter for belahs, while the bull oak's are slightly smaller and flattened.

7. Ground orchids

If you are here in late winter in a good season, look for ground orchids. Three species have been sighted in the Garden: pink and blue fingers (*Caladenia carnea* and *Caladenia caerulea* var. *caerulea*) and a greenhood (*Pterostylis bicolor*). All are tiny, seldom more than 10cm high, and have one flower per spike. Aborigines ate the tiny underground tubers.

8. Fairy Dell

Few natural grasses grow here and the area is covered with mosses, mulga ferns, lichens, sedges and liverworts. In a dry season these are an almost invisible grey, but as soon as rain falls they turn vibrant green, creating a 'Fairy Dell' complete with tiny white toadstools – and perhaps pixies and elves when our backs are turned! Follow the track from this point through a stand of bible (*Acacia aprepta*).

9. Termites and Friends

Some interesting facts: termites from one nest can amount to seven times the weight of a human being! The female

goanna or lace monitor lays her eggs in termite nests broken by echidnas and other predators. The termites repair their nests, creating a natural earthenware incubator around the eggs and the goanna returns at the appropriate time to release her young from the mound. Here, one of our rock cairns has been enclosed by a termite mound.

10. Man & Nature...

...have collaborated to sculpt a "throne" from tree roots, so before crossing the cleared area, take a seat and look around. Now imagine you are one of the animals living here. The open ground ahead gives little protection for wildlife and makes it easier for predators to hunt. How do you feel?

11. Belah Forest

Make your own way through this remnant forest, keeping between the coloured ties. Hear the satisfying scrunch of the needles beneath your feet! Although this area is so closely populated with tall belah, the lack of understorey gives it an almost open appearance. *Acacia crassa* subsp. *crassa* and wilga (*Geijera parviflora*) are among the few lower growing species.

12. Rest at the Nest

Here you have choices: back track, return to the start of the trail via the loop road, or follow signs and coloured ties to the gallery.

13. Trail's End

Ahead you will see the high tank storing water – the lifeblood of the Garden. If you don't need your brochure, please return it to one of our log boxes, or to the Gallery 200 metres to the left.

