

## 9. Boulton Flora Reserve



**Boulton Wildflower Reserve (Tallarook Wildflower Sanctuary Flora Reserve)** has a gorgeous spring wildflower display both in the 2ha fenced Reserve and in the surrounding bushlands especially behind the Cricket Club pavilion. The Reserve is part of a large bushland remnant cut by the Hume Freeway. It includes the 13ha **Tallarook Recreation Reserve** at the end of Sanctuary Road and the 20ha **Tallarook Bushland Reserve** on the Tallarook Pyalong Road on the opposite side of the Hume Freeway. The Recreation Reserve has a few walking tracks through the Reserve but no formed track into the Flora Reserve.

*This reserve is on the land of the Taungurung People. We acknowledge their Elders past and present and emerging, and their care of Country over many millennia. We ask that all people respect this ancient heritage and care for the land we now share.*

## Directions

**Boulton Wildflower Reserve:** Sanctuary Road runs south off the northern exit of Tallarook between the freeway and railway. After the houses and 1.2km from the start of Sanctuary Road (and 950m from Tallarook Station), a road to the right leads to the **Tallarook Recreation Reserve** entrance. Tracks left and right around the oval lead to the Sam Watts Pavilion. The Wildflower Reserve is in the bushland behind the pavilion. **Note:** the Wildflower Reserve is mapped on Google as “Tallarook Wildflower Sanctuary FR” behind the “Tallarook Reserve”.

**Tallarook Bushland Reserve** is on the Tallarook Pyalong Road south from Leahys Road. There are no roads into the Reserve.

## Walking Tracks

**Boulton Wildflower Reserve:** Dirt roads behind the pavilion in the Recreation Reserve will lead to some interesting areas, but the best of the wildflowers are uphill along kangaroo tracks in the bush around the Boulton Reserve. The Wildflower Reserve has a “rabbit-proof” fence but there is no need to cross this fence to see most of the wildflowers.

**Tallarook Recreation Reserve** has recent fire access tracks that run from the road loop behind the pavilion. This track runs down the slope, across a wet weedy area (impassable in wet conditions) and small chain-of-ponds creekline further along. The track then climbs up to the circuit road and back to the pavilion. Distance 700m. There is a shorter loop to the left after 150m back up to the pavilion. Distance 330m.

An overgrown track runs behind the eastern raised bank of the oval, from the main entry road around to a junction with the dirt road off Pioneer Street. A second overgrown track runs down the Reserve boundary from this junction to Sanctuary Road.

**Tallarook Bushland Reserve** has a few overgrown tracks.



Best access to the pavilion is on the left (south) end of the pavilion. The bushland areas have only rough and occasionally steep tracks.



The Cricket Club Pavilion has some outside seating areas.



Toilets are in the pavilion but are not generally available. Nearest toilets are in Railway Place off Main Street in the Tallarook township.

## Landform and Geology

A low range of the *Puckapunyal Formation* runs along the western side of the Hume Freeway. The Formation was formed by alternating layers of sands, silts and clays laid down on the edge of an ancient continental shelf 410 to 420 million years ago. These layers are visible in road cuttings west of the Hume Freeway.

Tallarook Bushland Reserve is on the western slopes of this range. Tallarook Recreation Reserve is on a spur running east from this range. The Flora Reserve is on a high part of this spur with many loose rocks on the surface.

A wide outwash slope runs diagonally from the southeast corner below the oval, with some channels and a chain of small ponds lower down the swale. A second swale runs down from behind the practice nets to Sanctuary Road.

## Vegetation

Boulton Flora Reserve was primarily established to preserve some significant local species including the Blue Finger Flower and 20 orchid species. Over 250 plants have now been recorded for the larger reserve area either side of the freeway. Species lists are in preparation.

The Flora Reserve and surrounding drier ridges are dry forest dominated by Red Box, with some Red Stringybarks near the top of the hill, typical of [Heathy Dry Forest](#) (front photo). A few of the trees are old although not very large, with small hollows. Most trees are younger regrowth or coppices from stumps. The forest areas have a dense understorey of Black and Golden Wattles, and a wide variety of Sifton Bush, Grey Everlastings and smaller wattles and peas. The ground cover includes large tussocks of Red-anthered Wallaby Grass, Sword-sedge, Wattle Mat-rush and Black-anther Flax-lily and a rich variety of prostrate shrubs, orchids, lilies and other wildflowers. Grasses are sparse and some of the driest ridgeline areas have little ground cover apart from leaf litter.



The eastern slopes and southern outwash slopes and swale in the wider reserve are more typical of [Grassy Woodland](#), although still dominated by Red Box with some Grey Box and Yellow Box in the lower slopes and swales. The slopes are scrubby but with more diversity of native grasses and forbs. The swales have more open grassy areas with swards of Weeping Grass.

After at least 60 years with no fire, the Wildflower Reserve was burnt in 2010. The burn was hot. Several trees were killed and the canopy was

opened up to annual (introduced) grasses. After the fire, some shrubs initially dominated the reserve, including an abundance of Grey Everlastings. By 2024, the shrubs had thinned, the annual grasses had declined and the original diversity appears to have recovered and with more timber back on the ground.

## Wildlife

The Reserve is part of a large area of bushland that is likely to provide sufficient area for breeding populations of a wide variety of species.



The habitat within the Reserve has moderate numbers of large trees with hollows and plenty of logs on the ground providing habitat. Hollow-dependent species such as Sugar Gliders, Ring-tailed Possums and Boobook Owls are found in the Reserve, as well as Echidnas that rely on good ground cover. Grey Kangaroos are abundant even in the fenced Flora Reserve, and Wombats may be seen. During summer, Spiny or Jewel Spiders and Australian Orb-weavers make for an interesting walk through the bush.

Several Boobooks have been found dead on the Freeway, emphasizing the risk posed by fast traffic through the middle of a bushland reserve. Construction of fauna crossings could help reduce fatalities and improve the connectivity between reserves for several species.

The area has not been well surveyed for animals and the listings do not reflect all the diversity in the Reserve. Species lists are in preparation.

## Aboriginal history

The Reserve is on the land of the Taungurung People.

## History after colonisation

The forests in the Tallarook Reserves are typical of many Crown lands where the timber has been removed but allowed to regrow. Timber and firewood collection would have begun in earnest with the arrival of the railway transport from 1872. This remnant crown bushland was a single large block until the Hume Freeway was cut through the in the early 1980s.

The Boulton Wildflower Reserve was established by the Boulton family in the early 1950s. The Wildflower Reserve was surveyed on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1953 by members of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria. It was originally fenced in the 1950s to exclude rabbits and re-fenced in the late 1990s

by BEAM Mitchell Environment Group with the assistance of the Mitchell Shire Council. David Laurie completed a detailed plant survey in 2006.

## Management

Although the Boulton Flora Reserve is now on a separate title to the rest of the Tallarook Recreation Reserve, the Reserves are managed jointly by the Tallarook Recreation Reserve Committee of Management and Mitchell Shire Council.

Tallarook Bushland Reserve is managed by Parks Victoria. The management of the Crown land north of the Arboretum is uncertain.

All these Reserves are Crown land and are included in the [Land Use Activity Agreement](#), a part of the [Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement](#).

## Further information

Mitchell Shire Council sites:

<https://www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au/our-region/parks-and-playgrounds/tallarook-recreation-reserve>

<https://www.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au/our-region/parks-and-playgrounds/boulton-flora-reserve>

Parks Victoria: Parks Victoria can be contacted on 13 1963 or go to

<https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/contact-us>. Website for the Tallarook Bushland Reserve is at

<https://www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/tallarook-bushland-reserve>. The website contains only general information on visiting reserves (at 30/6/2023).

Taungurung Land and Water Council at <https://taungurung.com.au/>

Taungurung Recognition and Settlement Agreement at <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/your-rights/native-title/taungurung-recognition-and-settlement-agreement>.

Goulburn Broken CMA Revegetation Guide: information on different ecological vegetation communities, plant communities and plants in the Sugarloaf zone at

<https://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/revegetation/zones/sugarloaf>.

## Acknowledgements

This Reserve Note was prepared by BEAM Mitchell Environment Group. Thanks to Mitchell Shire Council for their assistance and support. Information was obtained from reports to Mitchell Shire Council by David Laurie and Peter Mitchell.

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Version: 1    19 May 2024

These notes are a work in progress. If you have any comments or additional information on the nature and ecological history of the various bushland reserves in Tallarook, please contact us at <https://www.beam.org.au/contact>.



# Bushland Reserves in Tallarook

