



Dinner Plain looking toward Mt Hotham and Mt Feathertop

Find your closest Park

Victorian National Parks Association shows beautiful overviews of every Victorian National Park vnpa.org.au/parks/

Find places to walk in nature in Victoria

<https://bushwalkingvictoria.org.au/frontpage/walks-directory>

Find nature and biodiversity using NatureKit

<http://maps.biodiversity.vic.gov.au/viewer/?viewer=NatureKit>

Learn about your local trees

Find special trees near you on the National Trusts of Australia Register of Significant Trees <https://trustrees.org.au/>

Find what vegetation is where using Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC)

<https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/bioregions-and-evt-benchmarks>

Learn to identify a tree

Native Trees and Shrubs of South-eastern Australia – Leon Costermans (Book)

Get to know nature with groups

Become a member of Victorian National Parks Association and engage with outdoors activities like bushwalking and camping <https://vnpa.org.au/membership/new/>

Find a local club to experience nature with <https://bushwalkingvictoria.org.au/>

All photographs by Genevieve Tolhurst



Getting to Know Nature

Sunrise at Cleve Cole Hut

What's special about trees

Trees are complex living organisms that come in all shapes and sizes. Trees can be hundreds of years old and grow taller than many buildings. Forests and parks are beautiful places to retreat from our busy lives, but they also help keep our water clean, produce oxygen and support lives of many living creatures.

What's special about Victorian trees

Victoria has over 2500 different plant species. There are different types of trees across Victoria depending on the location. The hot dry Mallee, the cold mountainous Alps, and the wet coastal Otways are some of the varied ecosystems in our state.

Victoria is home to the tallest flowering plants in the world, called Mountain Ash, or *Eucalyptus regnans* which can be nearly 100 metres tall.

Where can we find trees

Native bushland is protected in our national parks. But we don't need to go far to get to know the native trees which line our streets and shade our parks.

We can easily get to know our local tree by heading to the local park, or going for a bushwalk with friends.

Benefits

Spending time in nature benefits your physical and mental health. Unplug from technology and reconnect with nature.

Getting to Know Nature in 5-4-3-2-1



Touch 4 surfaces

1. Touch the **trunk**. Is it smooth or rough? Would it peel or flake if you pulled it?
2. Feel the **leaves**. Are they hard or soft? Can you roll up the leaf without it breaking?
3. Trace the **edge** of the leaf. Is it straight or curved? Is it smooth or serrated?
4. Feel the **ground** through your feet. Is it wet and soft, or is it dry?



Smooth bark



Paper bark



Look for 5 things

1. Look up. Look how tall the **tree** is. How much sunlight can you see through the leaves?
2. Notice the **leaves**. Are they long and thin, short, or round? Can you see veins in the leaf?
3. Look at the **bark**. Does the trunk have the same bark as the branches?
4. Can you see any **birds, animals, or insects** making the tree their home? Notice any hollows or nests.
5. What **colour** are the leaves? Are there any colourful flowers, where on the tree are they? Can you see any fallen fruit-buds or flowers by your feet?



Fruit capsules



Listen for 3 sounds

1. Can you hear the sound of the leaves as they rustle in the **wind**?
2. What **animals** can you hear? Can you hear any birds singing?
3. As you walk, listen to the **ground** beneath your feet. Can you hear how dry or wet the leaves are as you step in them?



Bottlebrush flower



Flowering gum



Smell 2 odours

1. Take a **leaf** in your hand and crumple it. What does it smell like? Is it strong or weak in your nose? What does it remind you of?
2. Smell the **flowers** if they are blooming. Is the smell what you expected?



Reflect for 1 moment

1. Reflect on how you **feel**. How do you feel about this tree? What surprised you? What did you notice that you didn't notice at first glance?



Gum leaves