

Interpretive Tree Walk

1. *Quercus robur* – English Oak

The English oak has been among the most valuable of trees for timber for shipbuilding, furniture making and for houses. The construction of a single farmhouse in fifteenth century England used 330 trees, many as small as 150mm diameter. To obtain tall, straight trunks for ship-building, English oaks were grown among coppiced hazels (*Corylus avellana*), drawing the oak trees up to the light and ensuring long straight grained timbers.

2. *Quercus suber* – Cork Oak

This is another type of oak native to Spain and Portugal and to north Africa including Morocco. Note its bark. This thick, rough outer layer is the source of cork used for bottles. It is cut and carefully peeled away from the trunk and large branches. This harvesting takes place every 9-10 years taking care not to cut into the live tissue of the tree. The centre of the cork industry is Portugal though the recent use of plastic corks is reducing demand.

3. *Cedrus deodara* – Deodar

The name 'deodar' is from the Sanskrit meaning 'divine tree'. This is a fitting name for this elegant conifer from the western Himalayas. It can always be identified by the pendulous nature of its branch tips and its main growth tip. Note how the evergreen foliage forms little bundles of needle-tip leaves of up to 35 in a bunch. This is a characteristic of cedars and distinguishes them from other trees. Cedars have a lovely aromatic timber and are used for building, especially for intricately carved screens, for the timber is generally soft.

4. *Tristanopsis laurina* – Kanooka

This native tree has enormous potential for use as a street tree because it is very tolerant of compacted soils of the type we find in our streetscapes. It grows along our coastline from Gippsland to southern Queensland and bears pretty, small, yellow flowers in summer. Its smooth bark is grey but is often blotched with olive green patches making it most attractive throughout the year. It makes an ideal native tree for the home garden.

5. *Cinnamomum camphora* – Camphor Laurel

The name Cinnamomum is the classical name for the familiar spice cinnamon, produced from the dried bark of a close relative of the Camphor Laurel (*Cinnamomum verum*). Camphor laurel is the commercial source of camphor oil used extensively in perfumery and medicine. This oil is extracted from the pale, light wood. It has considerable insect repelling qualities and has been used by the Chinese for centuries for their traditional storage boxes. Possums enjoy eating the foliage. Look carefully and you may see areas where the foliage has been grazed leaving only small leaf stubs.

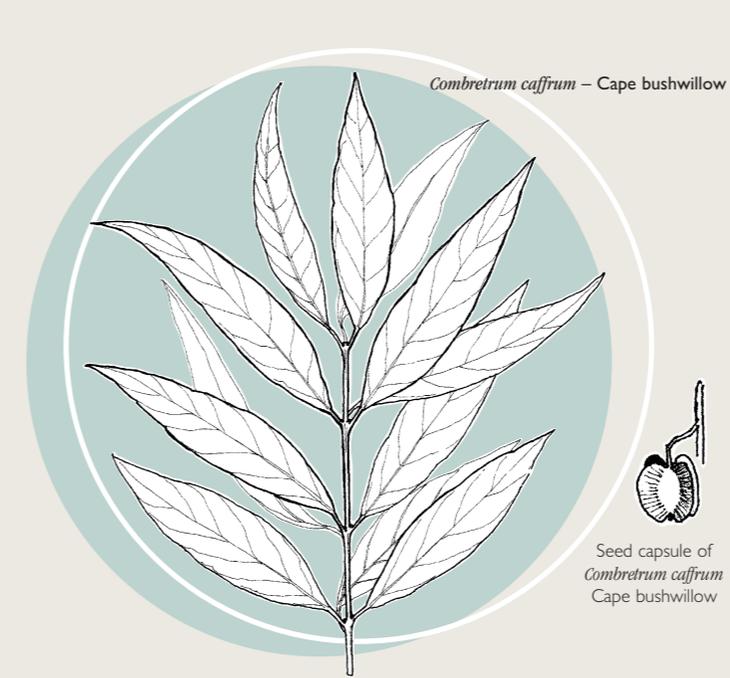


6. *Harpephyllum caffrum* – Wild Plum

Related to the mango and cashew nut, the Wild Plum is native to South Africa where it grows in riverine forests. Its fruits are up to 25mm long and red when ripe and though slightly sour they are relished by children in southern Africa where they are used to make jellies and a rose wine. Unfortunately you are unlikely to find fruit on this tree because male and female trees are separate and the two are required for pollination.

7. *Magnolia grandiflora* – Bull Bay Magnolia

This beautiful tree was introduced into gardens from its home in Florida, Texas and Arkansas, in 1732. Little wonder for it produces cup-shaped white flowers with a beautiful scent. Flowers can be 220mm across, and are usually seen in late Summer and Autumn. Grown from seed, plants take 20 years to flower. However our nurseries grow plants from cuttings when flowering is more quickly achieved. To grow at its best this lovely tree enjoys a high humidity with good summer rainfall. This is why leaves on trees in these gardens are smaller than those in their native locations which are generally more moist.

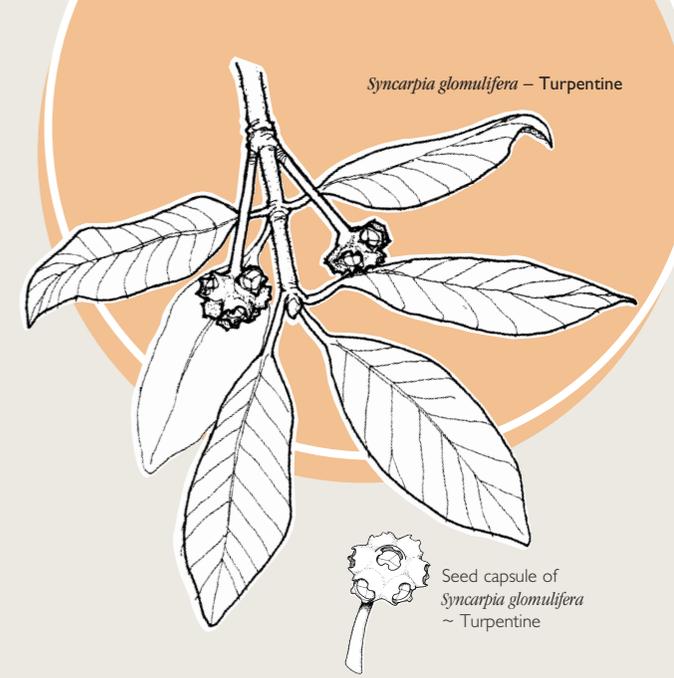


8. *Combretum caffrum* – Cape Bushwillow

This is a very rare tree in our gardens though it is not uncommon along river and stream banks and in moist places in the cape region of South Africa. To the Zulus this tree was valuable. Its bark acted as a charm to cause the downfall of their enemies. Otherwise it is not an especially useful plant though valuable as a fuel.

9. *Araucaria bidwillii* – Bunya Pine

The name Araucaria comes from a Chilean Indian tribe, the Araucanos. Why should an Australian tree from Queensland be named to honour a Chilean tribe, you may ask? Other Araucarias, notably the famous Monkey Puzzle Tree (*Araucaria araucana*), are native to Chile and these trees were named there. Bunya is the Aboriginal name for the tree. Bunya Pine can produce 5kg cones, and the seeds were regularly eaten by Aborigines, who held great feasts every three years when seed crops were highest. Roasted or boiled the seeds taste like roast parsnip. The foliage is extremely prickly but the timber is valuable. The tree was discovered by Andrew Petrie, the Superintendent of Government Works at Moreton Bay, and named to honour J.S. Bidwill who took seed to Kew Botanic Gardens. A cautious note – Don't read this beneath the tree. A 5kg cone can make a considerable dent in your head!



10. *Calodendron capense* – Cape Chestnut

Cape Chestnut is a beautiful small tree bearing delicate orchid-like flowers in shades that vary from pale mauve to white, often with darker speckling. They flower in December and January. Propagation of this tree is very difficult and growth is slow so they are infrequently grown in home gardens. Look on the ground and you may find a hard woody seed capsule covered by spiky, wooden bumps.

11. *Syncarpia glomulifera* – Turpentine

This beautiful native tree has very distinctive foliage, smelling of turpentine when crushed (thus its common name), and massed creamy white summer flowers. Its tall, straight trunk is very typical of the species and has been one of the reasons for its use as a timber tree. The other is its resistance to rotting especially in water. Because of this its timber is used for wharfs and piers and was used to create the wharf at Lord Howe Island. In gardens it has good drought tolerance and will grow on poor, shallow soils.

12. *Brachychiton acerifolius* – Illawarra Flame

The Flame Tree is one of the most characteristic of Australian trees with large maple-like leaves, and remarkable flamboyant scarlet flowers. Since these develop following the loss of foliage they can look very dramatic. They are most numerous following a hot, dry period of weather. The bark of the Illawarra Flame is fibrous and was used by Aborigines to make a cord that was then made into fishing nets among other uses.

