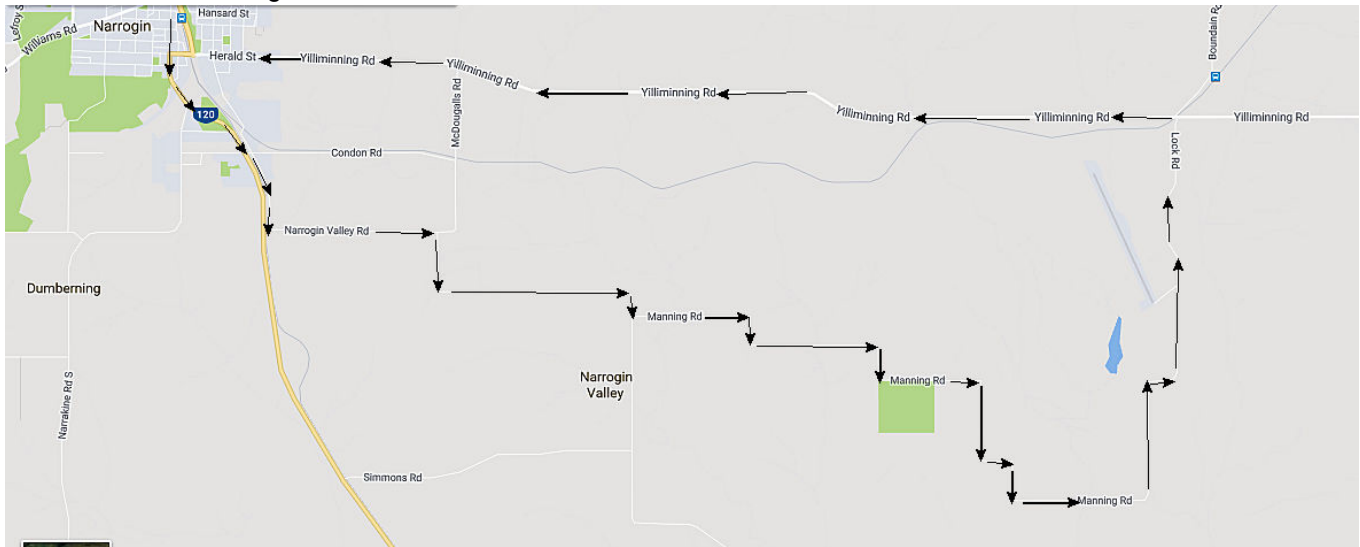




Greetings fellow Foxies,

This small ~45 ha reserve has unusual soils and vegetation and is well worth a visit in spring. It is a 12km pleasant drive on back roads that wind through magnificent [wandoo](#), [red morrel](#) and [salmon gum](#) trees that have escaped the surgery inflicted on most roadside trees in the name of safety. A good way to return to Narrogin is via Lock Road through the extensive Arthur River flats.



The landscape and soils are determined by underlying rock types. The most common rock is granite that weathers to form sandy soils but has been intruded here by lines (dykes) of dolerite that weathers to red clay. These dykes appear mostly as ridges because very resistant ironstone gravel formed on them has resisted erosion more than granitic lateritic soils between them.

The main ridge has dense brown and blue mallet woodland with very little shrub understory, but others have patches of wandoo, and rock sheoak that is the best place to find orchids. I saw a big patch of cowslip orchids recently on the western edge of the reserve.

The eastern side is a deep sand over gravel plain with unusual low kwongan heath that is dominated by small *Allocasuarina microstachya* tammars. Despite being prickly and not a showy area, I love the plain's myriad shapes and plant types including the tiny and beautiful *Acacia squamata*, Christmas tree *Nuytsia floribunda*, and other shrubs adapted to sandy soils.



The striking curry flower *Lysinema pentapetalum* apparently gets its curry powder smell from chemicals produced by a mycorrhizal fungus associated with its roots.





*Allocasuarina microstachya*



*Lysinema pentapetalum* curry flower



*Acacia squamata* and a *Guichenotia* species



Strange curly plant

The best place to stop is on Manning Road at the north eastern end of the reserve where there is a mixture of vegetation and wildflower types. Of particular interest is a line of mallees fringed by melaleucas that projects into the prickly heath. The vegetation overlies richer soil from a dolerite dyke that has intruded the sandy granite underlying the heath.



Mallees fringed by melaleucas in a line through the prickly heath

Two things of particular interest here are:



1. In September spectacular red flowers of *Marianthus erubescens* can be seen where the vine climbs up the mallees.
2. Tree enthusiasts like me like the mallees that are mallee forms of the two malllets that also occur near the corner. These are brown mallet *E. astringens*/ mallee *E. thamnoides* (shiny green leaves, horn shaped bud caps) and blue mallet *E. gardneri*/mallee *E. pluricalis* (dull blue-green leaves long pointed bud caps).

*E.pluricalis ssp. porphyria* is a spectacular mallee with dull purple green leaves and bright yellow flowers that I planted in the arboretum last year and can be seen flowering now as a street tree in James Street (thanks to Peter White our eucalypt expert, and fungi king (this title is being pursued by yours truly)).



*Marianthus erubescens*



*Eucalyptus pluricalis*

Cars can drive around the perimeter of the reserve if driven carefully.