

# Plant Sites of Lightning Ridge



*Solanum* sp.



*Goodenia glabra*



*Teucrium racemosum*



*Ptilotus exaltatus*



*Eremophila longifolia*



*Calandrinia balonensis*

## Introduction

For visitors from the east coast and southern parts of Australia, you are entering the semi-arid climate zone (less than 500mm rainfall), which will allow you to observe many plant species for the first time.

This may be your first chance to see a Wilga, Myall (or Boree), Leopardwood, Mulga, Sandalwood, Rosewood or Whitewood. Look



Whitewood

for Eremophilas, Parakeelya, Senecio desert daisies, Warrior Bush, Stiff Cherry and Wild Orange in flower.

Plant communities on the Red Kandosol soils of the ridges are quite different from those of the surrounding black soil plains.



The bark (top) and pod of the Leopardwood tree

Start at the Visitor Information Centre and IBC Gardens, where you will see many local plant species identified with labels, then enjoy finding your way around the sites

in this brochure. Take a field guide book with you if you have one, to help with identifications. Site coordinates: use Zone 55, system GDA 94.

## Please note:

Take extreme care when entering and leaving highways and main roads.

Plant sites shown on the map are on lands accessible to the public. Permission should be sought from the owners before entering any private lands.

Opal mines are located on private mineral titles and should not be interfered with.

# Lightning Ridge plant sites

**Site 1** - Old Dam, Castlereagh Highway  
(Grid ref. 592199mE, 6738598mN)

Pull in and rest under the Myall tree next to the shallow pond. Plants to note: Budda, Leopardwood, Whitewood, Warrior Bush, Prickly Wattle (Elegant Wattle) and Rosewood.



Myall (above); Myall leaves and pods (left)



Budda in flower

**Site 2** - Quandong Enclosure, Castlereagh Highway (Grid ref. 595094mE, 6736153mN)



Quandong tree (left), flower and fruit during October.



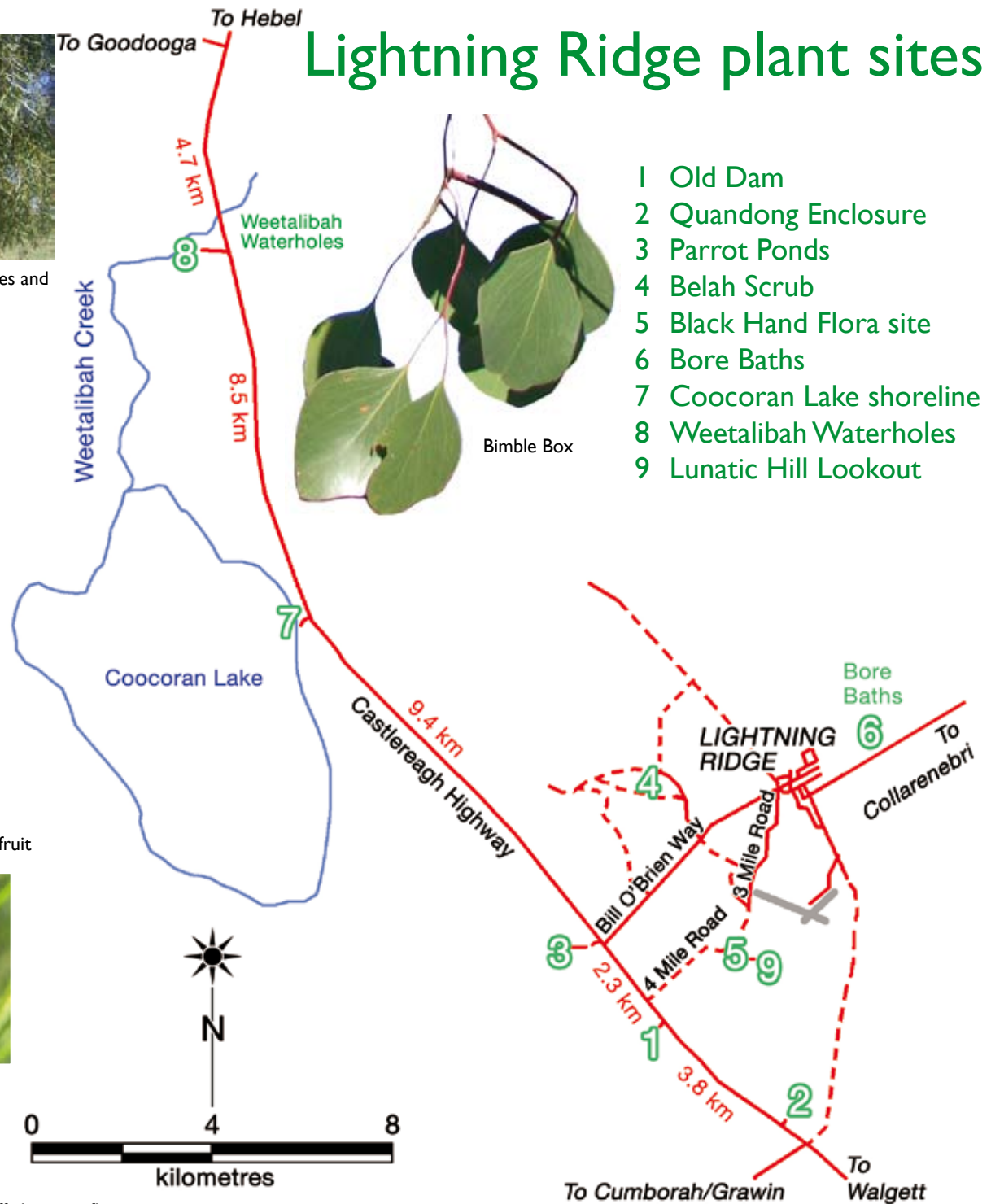
Quandong tree (left), flower and fruit

From here, head 400 metres south and turn right towards Grawin. Look at the Stiff Cherry understory along the southern side of the road for the first kilometre.

If you continue on to Cumborah and Grawin (60km) you will pass a good example of spinifex/ironbark woodland 3.6 kilometres north of Cumborah.



Stiff cherry in flower (left) and fruit (above)



**Site 3-** Parrot Ponds, 250m west of Castlereagh Highway (590356mE, 6740608mN)

From the 'T' intersection at the highway make sure you drive around the northern end of the first pond (this was a borrow pit for road construction) and travel west 100m. Here you will see Gruie trees, also known as Sour Plum, Colane or Emu Apple. Travel a further 100m west, cross the basement of the old, gravelled Castlereagh Highway and arrive at the Ponds. Travel up and over the dirt bank another 100 metres west into the Eucalypt woodland. Look for Aboriginal scar trees.



Gruie

**Site 4 -** Belah Scrub (*Casuarina cristata*) on gravel road to opal miners' washing tank (Grid ref. 592366mE, 6744280mN)

Turn north from Bill O'Brien Way at Benny Walford's Crossing, drive 1.1km and take the right-hand fork, then continue for another 400m. Walk into the Belah Scrub on the left side and

observe the plant community here. (400 metres further on, to the north, on the left hand side is a large Lignum Fuchsia bush.)



Lignum Fuchsia

To view a small belt of Gidgee trees, cross back over Bill O'Brien Way at Benny Walford's Crossing and head south east on the gravel road for 1.1km. Observe the tall black trunks of the Gidgee, with loose bark - these are a large wattle similar to Brigalow. In wet or humid weather, they exude a strong smell, hence the name 'Stinking Wattle'. Continue on to Three Mile Road near the Big Opal.



Gidgee tree (top) and flower (left and above)

**Site 5 -** Black Hand flora site, Three Mile Road (Grid ref. 593403mE, 6740546mN)  
28 plant species can be found here. See the plant regeneration project at Lunatic Hill lookout 300m east.

**Site 6 -** Bore Baths, Sherman Way (596788mE, 6744738mN)  
Look for good specimens of Wild Orange, Whitewood, Myall and Warrior Bush.



Warrior Bush

**Site 7-** Coocoran Lake shoreline, Castlereagh H'way (Grid ref. 584167mE, 6747675mN)  
Coolibah trees grow on the lunette ('fossil' sandy beach) along the ancient shoreline. Coolibahs can be identified by the occasional 'saddle tree' (long curving branch/trunk close to the ground).

**Site 8 -** Weetalibah Waterholes, Castlereagh Highway (Grid ref. 582164mE, 6756028mN)  
A beautiful Coolibah-lined waterhole on Weetalibah Creek. Look for Shrubby Rice Flowers.

**Site 9 -** Lunatic Hill Lookout (Grid ref. 593940mE, 6740354mN)  
Look for local plants colonising the rehabilitated mine site.

Coolibah Trees (below) and flower (right)



# Lightning Ridge - observed flora

This list indicates interesting species that you are likely to see at the sites mentioned in this guide. It is not a comprehensive listing.

Common name	Genus / species
<input type="checkbox"/> Beefwood	<i>Grevillea striata</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Belah	<i>Casuarina cristata</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Bimble Box	<i>Eucalyptus populnea</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Box	<i>Eucalyptus largiflorens</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Black Cottonbush	<i>Maireana decalvans</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue Pincushion	<i>Brunonia australis</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Broad-leaf Parakeelya	<i>Calandrinia balonensis</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Budda	<i>Eremophila mitchellii</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Bush Passionfruit	<i>Capparis lasiantha</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Caustic Vine	<i>Sarcostemma viminalis</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Coolibah	<i>Eucalyptus microtheca</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Creek Wilga	<i>Acacia bignoniiflora</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Crimson Fox Tail	<i>Ptilotus sessilifolius</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Desert Cassia	<i>Senna artemisioides</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Elegant Wattle	<i>Acacia victoriae</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Emu Bush	<i>Eremophila longifolia</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Desert Jasmine	<i>Jasminum lineare</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Fringed Lily	<i>Thysanotus manglesianus</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Gidgee	<i>Acacia cambagei</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Goathead burr	<i>Schlerolaena bircornis</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Grey Cassia	<i>Senna artemisioides</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Gruie	<i>Owenia acidula</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Ironwood	<i>Acacia excelsa</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Kurrajong	<i>Brachycton populneum</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Leopardwood	<i>Flindersia maculosa</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Lignum Fuchsia	<i>Eremophila polyclada</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Mulga	<i>Acacia aneura</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Myall	<i>Acacia pendula</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Nardoo	<i>Marsilea drummondii</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Needlewood	<i>Hakea leucoptera</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Sandalwood	<i>Santalum lanceolatum</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Old Man Saltbush	<i>Atriplex nummularia</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Pusstails	<i>Ptilotus exaltatus</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Quandong	<i>Santalum acuminatum</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> River Cooba	<i>Acacia stenophylla</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Roly-poly	<i>Salsola kali</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Rosewood	<i>Alectryon oleifolius</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Rosy Dock (intr.)	<i>Rumex vesicarius</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Ruby Saltbush	<i>Enchylaena tomentosa</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Serrated Goodenia	<i>Goodenia cycloptera</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Shrubby Rice Flower	<i>Pimelia microcephala</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Cassia	<i>Senna artemisioides</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Silver-leafed Ironbark	<i>Eucalyptus melanophloia</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Spearwood	<i>Pandorea pandorana</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Spinifex	<i>Triodia mitchellii</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Spiny Fanflower	<i>Scaevola spinescens</i>



Mulga trees and (inset) Mulga blossom

## Interesting locals

**Wild Orange**, from the genus *Capparis* (family Capparaceae) is represented in Lightning Ridge by a number of different species, each with its unique morphology. *Capparis* spp. attract the Caper White butterfly.



Wild Orange

**Hudson Pear** is a nasty, introduced cactus. It is invasive and declared noxious. Keep well away from its barbed spines.



Hudson Pear

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Emu Bush      | <i>Eremophila maculata</i>        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spring-pod Cassia     | <i>Senna artemisioides</i>        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sticky Hopbush        | <i>Dodonaea viscosa</i>           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stiff Cherry          | <i>Exocarpos aphyllus</i>         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sugarwood             | <i>Myoporum platycarpum</i>       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supplejack (vinetree) | <i>Ventilago viminalis</i>        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thorny Saltbush       | <i>Rhagodia spinescens</i>        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Variable Daisy        | <i>Brachycome ciliaris</i>        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warrior Bush          | <i>Apophyllum anomalum</i>        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weeping Pittosporum   | <i>Pittosporum phylliraeoides</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Western Boobialla     | <i>Myoporum montanum</i>          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White Cypress Pine    | <i>Callitris glaucophylla</i>     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whitewood             | <i>Atalaya hemiglauca</i>         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wild Lemon (myrtle)   | <i>Canthium oleifolium</i>        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wild Orange           | <i>Capparis mitchellii</i>        |



Wilga (above) and in flower (left)

## Contacts

Lightning Ridge Visitors' Information Centre  
Phone: 02 6829 1670

Handy Reference Guides:  
Plants of Western NSW, Cunningham

Plants of Inland Australia, Moore  
Plant Identification in the Arid Zone, Milson

For reference information, field guide books and more details around Lightning Ridge, enquire at the 'Opal Books etc' shop at Bluey Motel, 32 Morilla Street, Lightning Ridge  
Phone: 02 6829 0380

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Spiny Fanflower



Ruby Saltbush



Lightning Ridge  
Black opal country