

Tour 15

Western Australia - a Global Hotspot for Flora and Fine Wine, Timber, Tree Fruits and Vegetable Production

Six or nine day Australian tour

(Sunday 24 - Friday 29 August or Monday 1 September 2014)



Tour Cost - Short (6 days):

\$1,500 (pp twin share; \$2,100pp with single supplement)

Tour Cost - Full (9 days):

\$2,600 (pp twin share; \$3,600pp with single supplement)

Tour Leaders: TBA

This tour will concentrate on scientific and technical aspects of horticultural production in a region renowned globally for its floral biodiversity (and surfing!); the southwest of Western Australia. It will also present an opportunity to link to independent tours of the flora in remote areas: the gold fields, the Pilbara (a place of great scenic beauty and one the globe's most advanced centres of iron ore mining); the Kimberley (likewise great scenic beauty and unique aboriginal culture, especially for those willing to venture off-the-beaten track), or to one of the world's least known but wonderfully biodiverse coral reefs (swim with whale sharks). *(Photograph from John Considine).*

The main tour will begin in Perth with a visit to Kings Park and Botanic Gardens: the research laboratories, the native plant breeding programme and the floral collection. Visit major and boutique wineries exploiting the local environment. The second to fourth days will involve travelling by coach to the southwest production centres of Margaret River/Manjimup/Pemberton. We will visit famous wineries and a barrel tasting for those who are interested, lunch in the vineyard and to selected local tourist attractions: forests, limestone caves, surf breaks and artist galleries (fine timber products are a specialty). The Manjimup/Pemberton visit will include a tour of the DAFWA research station and the apple breeding programme; visits to selected local fruit and vegetable production businesses and to scenic areas (mainly forests). The return to Perth will be away from the coast and will include an opportunity to see some of the local flora within the scarp landscape (mainly laterite over granite, home of the globe's most efficient bauxite mines). *(Photograph from John Considine).*



Itinerary

Day 1: Sunday 24 August 2014

Make own arrangements for travel to Perth and book into your Tour hotel.

Overnight Perth, no meals provided (own arrangements).

Day 2: Monday 25 August 2014 Perth and Swan Valley

This morning we visit the beautiful Kings Park and Botanic Gardens; Science directorate; Plant breeding and tour the Garden. Lunch at Houghton winery.

Afternoon: Swan Valley wineries; Houghton, Talijancich, and Mann; evening meal at Hills winery. *(Photograph from Western Australia Tourism).*

Overnight Perth, Meals included: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner.



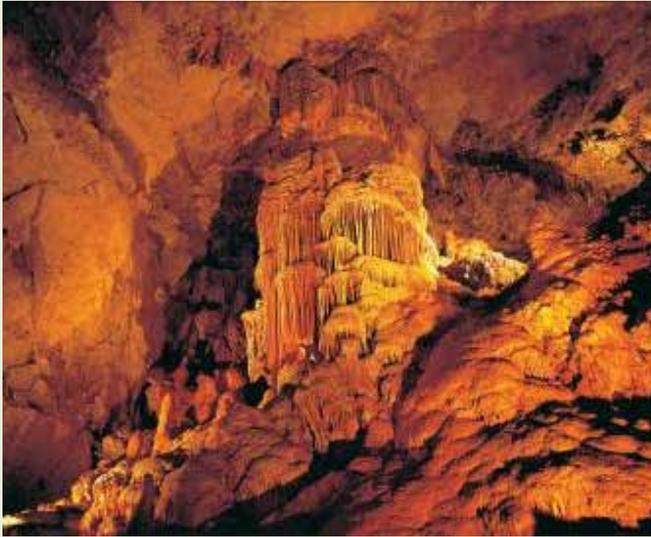
Day 3: Tuesday 26 August 2014 Margaret River

Enjoy a 3 hour drive to the beautiful Margaret River Region, followed by lunch at Cullen's winery. After lunch, activities include a barrel tasting at Moss Wood; a viticulture discussion at Cape Leeuwin winery; explore one of the many Margaret River region's spectacular

limestone caves. *(Photograph from John Considine).* The Margaret River region offers visitors some of the most unique and stunning cave experiences in Australia. Along the spine of the Leeuwin Naturaliste Ridge and beneath soaring karri forest lie more than 150 caves, the most spectacular being Lake, Mammoth and Jewel caves. These caves belong to a series of complex and fragile karst systems which are landscapes formed by the rapid drainage of water underground. Karst systems are characterised most often by caves, dolines (large holes), blind valleys, sinking streams and springs. The main road that travels along the Leeuwin Naturaliste Ridge is aptly named Caves Road. *(Photograph from Western Australia Tourism).*

Overnight Margaret river township, Meals included: Breakfast/Lunch. Enjoy dinner at one of the many excellent eateries in the main street (own cost).





Day 4: Wednesday 27 August 2014 Manjimup/Pemberton

Another scenic 2-3 hour drive from Margaret River to Manjimup/Pemberton, visiting wineries and galleries along the way. *(Photograph from John Considine).*

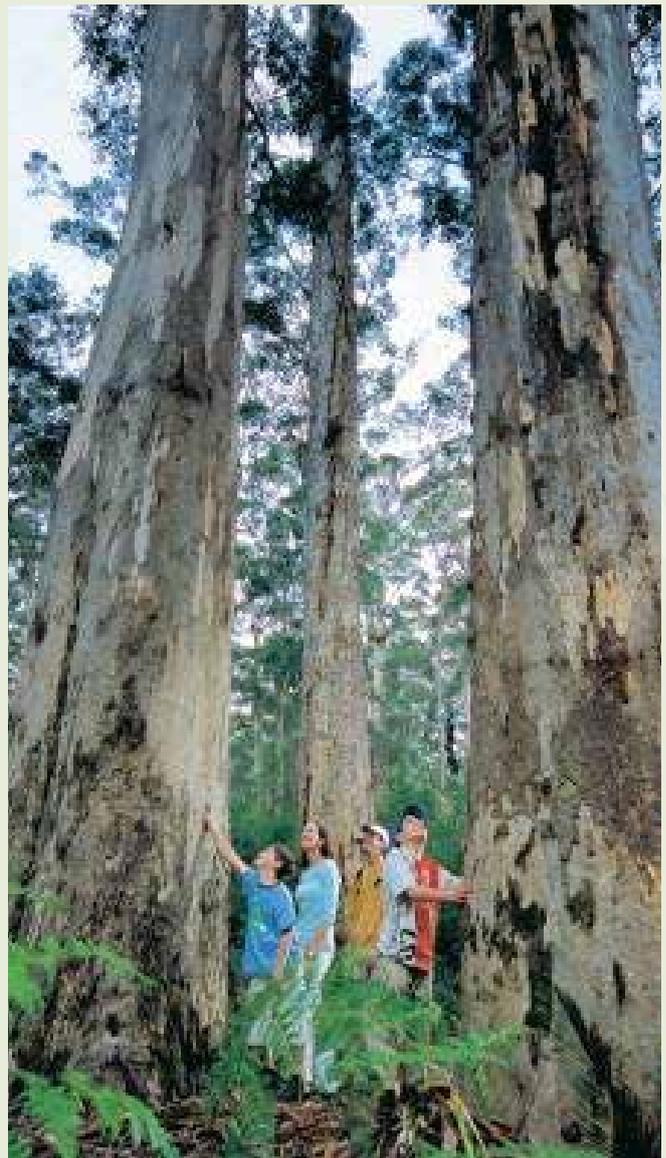
Overnight Pemberton, Meals included: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner.



Day 5: Thursday 28 August 2014 return to Perth

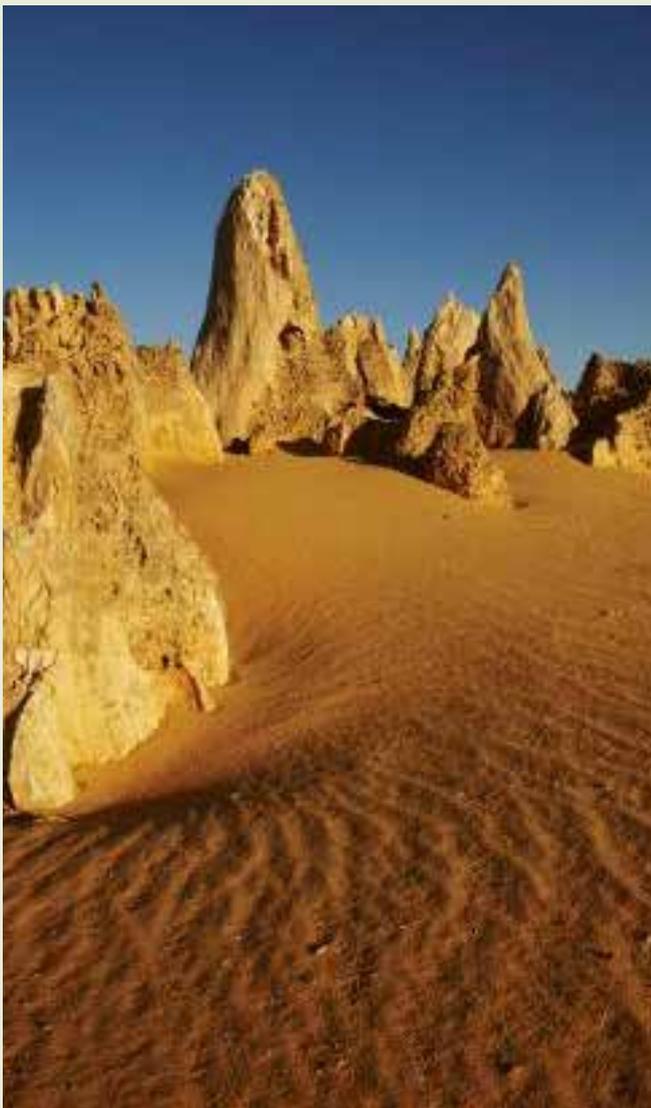
This morning, we visit one of Australia's largest cauliflower production regions before entering Western Australia's magnificent, giant karri forests. Lunch is provided at the Western Australia Department of Agriculture and Food horticultural research station where we will gain an insight into their apple breeding program. Return to Perth via the Ferguson Valley. *(Photograph from Western Australia Tourism).*

Overnight Perth, Meals included: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner.



Day 6: Friday 29 August 2014 The Pinnacles, Lesueur National Park

Today, our coach takes us along the scenic coastal route to Jurien Bay. We will visit the Pinnacles in the Nambung National Park. The lunar-like Pinnacles form one of Australia's most unique and fascinating natural landscapes. Formed over millions of years, thousands of tall limestone spires rise eerily out of the yellow desert sands of Nambung National Park, just outside the coastal town of Cervantes. The Mount Lesueur National Park straddles the boundary between the wheatbelt and mid west regions of Western Australia. It lies in the Geraldton



Sandplains bioregion, characterised by scrubby heath and many Proteaceaeous plants. Vegetation in the park is structurally complex, with patches of woodland amongst shrublands. There are over 900 indigenous plant species in the park, many of which are endemic. Rare or threatened species include the Mount Lesueur Grevillea, Forrest's Wattle, the Lesueur Hakea and the Laterite Mallee. The park is the northern limit for Jarrah and Mountain Marri, both of which grow as mallees instead of the more usual tall tree form. *(Photograph from Western Australia Tourism).*

Overnight Geraldton, Meals included: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner (for those continuing on the second half of the tour), Breakfast only for those leaving the tour today.

Day 7: Saturday 30 August 2014 Kalbarri National Park

Today we explore the Kalbarri gorges and spectacular displays of the famous Western Australian wildflowers. The major geographical features of the Kalbarri National Park include the Murchison River gorge which runs for nearly 80 kilometres on the lower reaches of the Murchison River. Spectacular coastal cliffs are located on the coast near the mouth of the Murchison River and the town of Kalbarri. *(Photograph from John Considine).*



The area is famous for the diversity and extent of wildflowers during winter months. Twenty-one plant species are found only in the coastal cliff tops and gorge country, predominantly in the National Park. One of the best known local plants is the Kalbarri catspaw, a small yellow or red plant that is usually seen on recently burnt country from August to September. Several orchids can only be seen in and near the park, including the Kalbarri spider orchid and the Murchison hammer orchid. The small-petalled *Beyeria* or short-petalled *Beyeria*, once thought to be extinct, was re-discovered in the park in 1994. The population in the park is one of only three known populations. Kalbarri has many birds and animals, the latter mainly nocturnal mammals, including western grey kangaroos, thorny devils, emus, ospreys, wedge-tailed eagles and pelicans. There are 170 species of birds in the region.

Overnight Geraldton, Meals included: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner.

Day 8: Sunday 31 August 2014 Inland National Parks, return to Perth

Today we return to Perth via the inland route, passing through the village of Eneabba, Coomaloo nature reserve, and Badgingara and Moore River National Parks. The Badgingara National Park features high breakaway country overlooking low undulating sandplains, home to incredible diversity of endemic wildflowers. Mullering Brook passes through the park creating a swampy area. Vegetation, mostly low scrub, includes Mottlecah, smokebush, Banksia, Verticordia, Kangaroo Paw and the rare Badgingarra Mallee. The area is threatened by the spread of dieback. Some of the spectacular wildflowers include rare species such as *Hakea flabellifolia*, *Strangea cynanchicarpa* and *Eucalyptus pendens*.

The Moore River National Park is located within the wheatbelt region of Western Australia. (Photograph from *Western Australia Tourism*).

Overnight Perth, Meals included: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner.



Day 9: Monday 1 September 2014 Tour ends

This morning, you continue on your onward journey. We hope you have enjoyed your time in Western Australia.

(Photograph from John Considine).

Meals included: Breakfast only.

