

SHELTERED COASTAL FOREST

The Norfolk Island Vegetation Mapping Project has described and mapped 14 distinct native plant communities on Norfolk Island. This series of fact sheets presents information about each of the communities.

Sheltered Coastal Forest

Thick forest that only occurs close to the coast in areas protected from wind and salt. Small pockets remain at Bumboras, Ball Bay and Selwyn Reserve.

This forest is differentiated from Lowland Valley Hardwood Forest by its location in the lowest parts of lowland valleys, very close to the coast, where there is apparently a strong coastal influence. The coastal species in this community

that largely do not occur in the Lowland Valley Hardwood Forest include the ferns King's brackenfern (*Pteris kingiana*) and (*Asplenium difforme*) and the trees (*Excoecaria agallocha*) and (*Pisonia brunoniana*).

Ironwood (*Nestegis apetala*) is a small, relatively common tree, usually with wavy-edged leaves. Fruits are most often yellow, sometimes red or purple, and look like small olives.



Sheltered Coastal Forest in Cascade Reserve. Photo: Kevin Mills

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Plant community	Key species	Other species	Threatened species
Sheltered Coastal Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ironwood (<i>Nestegis apetala</i>) • Beech (<i>Myrsine ralstoniae</i>) • Bloodwood (<i>Baloghia inophylla</i>) • White oak (<i>Lagunaria patersonia</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maple (<i>Elaeodendron curtispindula</i>) • Norfolk pine (<i>Araucaria heterophylla</i>) • Devil's guts (<i>Capparis nobilis</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meryta (<i>Meryta latifolia</i>) • Beech (<i>Myrsine ralstoniae</i>) • King's brackenfern (<i>Pteris kingiana</i>) • Siah's backbone (<i>Streblus brunonianus</i>)

Indicative species composition

The table above identifies the key species present (those species that are most characteristic of the plant community), other species (additional species that are likely to be present and assist in defining the community), and some of the threatened species present.

Further information

These fact sheets are based on the Norfolk Island Vegetation Mapping Project conducted by the Invasive Species Council between 2018 and 2020. Naomi Christian and Dr Kevin Mills conducted the vegetation surveys, and described and mapped the native plant communities. Two maps were produced – one showing the estimated distribution of native plant communities in 1750, and one showing their distribution in 2020.

The plant community maps are available at:

- www.norfolkisland.gov.nf/services/waste-and-environment/native-vegetation/native-vegetation-mapping-project
- www.invasives.org.au/niveg

There are 180 native plant species on the Norfolk Island Group, of which around 25% are endemic.

Forty-six species have been identified as threatened with

extinction. Describing and mapping the 14 native plant communities was done to help land managers protect and restore habitat for these threatened species and other wildlife of Norfolk Island.

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Banner artwork utilises an illustration by Ferdinand Bauer, 1804. Natural History Museum, London.

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