

# WILD FAMILIES



Flying Duck Orchid.  
Photo: Margaret MacDonald

Enjoying, learning and looking after nature with the family

## WACKY WILD WILDFLOWERS

Spring is a lovely time to explore and discover the wacky, wild nature of Victoria's wildflowers, and you don't need to be an expert to discover and learn about them.

One of the great things about wildflowers is that their wild variety of colours, sizes and wacky shapes are so diverse and inspiring that there is always more to discover. Have you ever seen a 'Flying Duck Orchid'? There's one pictured at the top of this page. It really looks like a flying duck! What about the puffy bright yellow clusters of flowers on a wattle tree?

## Wacky wildflower wandering

Wacky wildflower wandering is as simple as heading out for an adventure in the bush and looking for wildflowers on your way.

The best time of year for this type of adventure is spring and in the alpine region, summer is best.

On your wander, look for wildflowers up in the trees, around you in shrubs and down low on the ground. Keep your eyes open for different colours and shapes.

On a wacky wildflower wander, you



Wildflowers are wonderful to draw, there are so many colours and shapes. Photo: It's a Wildlife

could find hundreds of wildflowers putting on a huge show of different colours. Or you might find you need to look very carefully and closely for flowers because they are so well camouflaged, tiny or even green.

## Where to go for wildflower wanders

You can see wildflowers in the bush right across Victoria, from Little Desert National Park in the west, Anglesea Heath on the Coast,

Remember to leave wildflowers wild. They are food, homes and for everyone to enjoy.



Greater Bendigo National Park in the middle and the Alpine National Park in the east. There are also lovely wildflower spots around Melbourne.

If you need help looking for a place where wildflowers grow a great start is [www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au), just search for 'wildflowers'. Your local council website might have suggestions for wildflower places near you.







# EXPLORE & LEARN

Check out the fingers in the 'Blue finger-flower'.

Photo: It's a Wildlife

## WILDFLOWER PHOTOGRAPHY

One great way to build enthusiasm for wildflowers is to try photographing them for those who are old enough to handle a camera.

Photography can really build on the excitement involved in finding a wildflower and the ability to share that find with others.

A camera with a macro function is helpful but many camera phones are up to the task. Simple tips include using a macro function, choosing a flower that is still (not blowing in the wind) and keeping steady hands. Good photos take concentration and effort, so plenty of encouragement always helps!



## PEAS IN A POD

Native pea flowers come from the same 'family' as the peas you eat, but these ones aren't for eating!

As part of the 'pea family' they have a seed pod much like a pea pod. Pea flowers have a distinctive shape like those pictured here.

Fabulous wildflowers in the pea family found in Victoria include:

- 'Running Postman' has bright red

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flowers and branches that 'run' along the ground, a bit like a postie in red delivering letters!

- Hop Bitter-pea is a 1-3m high shrub with clusters of yellow

and brown flowers.

- Purple Coral Pea is a climbing or scrambling plant with purple flowers. These flowers are often found in gardens too.

Can you find these wildflowers in nature? The top photo is a 'Running Postman', the yellow flower is Hop Bitter-pea and the last photo is of a Purple Coral-pea. Photos: Pam Sheean and Nic McCaffrey



## WILD FAMILIES

# WACKY WILDFLOWER FUN

1.

*What colour/s is the wildflower?*

2.

*What does your wildflower feel like? What do the leaves feel like?*

3.

*What size is the wildflower?*

4.

*Does it have petals? How many?*

5.

*What size is the plant it is growing on?*

6.

*How many wildflowers are on the same plant?*

7.

*Give your wildflower a name. You could make one up or look up what it is called in a wildflower book.*

8.

*Watch your wildflower for a few minutes. Is anything coming to visit it? What?*

9.

*This is a space for a kid to draw a wildflower.*

10.

*This is a space for an adult to draw a wildflower.*

## WILDFLOWER FUN

Above is a list of questions and things to look for that can help prompt learning about wildflowers together. You can work with the questions and activities one at a time or just use them as a guide. The questions can be done for one wildflower but you can do them as many times as you like!

Record your findings with a drawing, photo, a description or whatever works for your group. Remember to explore, discuss and remember.

Send your activity sheet to [vnpa@vnpa.org.au](mailto:vnpa@vnpa.org.au) so we can share it with other families.



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Photo: It's a Wildlife

## CARING FOR WILDFLOWERS

Wildflowers are an important part of nature in Victoria as they provide food for many insects, birds and mammals.

The best way to care for wildflowers is to look, smell and touch without picking them, mowing them or standing on them. We can avoid standing on them by keeping to tracks and watching closely where we are walking.

This gives the wildflowers a chance to sow seeds for the next generation and ensures other people have the chance to enjoy them too.

There are many species of Victorian wildflowers that grow beautifully in gardens and pots.

Visit your local indigenous nursery to find some you could put in your garden so your family can enjoy them regularly.

Some native wildflowers in your garden may even attract wildlife such as beautiful birds and butterflies.



Spider orchids are pretty wild.

Photo: Nic McCaffrey

## LEARNING MORE ABOUT WILDFLOWERS

There are many field guides to wildflowers in Victoria that include coloured pictures and descriptions.

If your family wants to try and

identify wildflowers, books such as 'Wildflowers of the Brisbane Ranges', 'The Alps in Flower' and 'Victoria's Box Ironbark country, a field guide', can be really useful.

Look out for good field guides available online.



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