



# Western Sydney Dry Rainforest

## Conservation Status

Western Sydney Dry Rainforest is listed as an endangered ecological community under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*.



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## Description

Western Sydney Dry Rainforest is a dry vine scrub community of the Cumberland Plain. Canopy trees include prickly paperbark (*Melaleuca styphelioides*), hickory wattle (*Acacia implexa*) and native quince (*Alectryon subcinereus*). There are many rainforest species in the shrub layer, such as large mock olive (*Notolaea longifolia*), hairy clerodendron (*Clerodendron tomentosum*) and yellow pittosporum (*Pittosporum revolutum*). The shrub layer combines with vines, such as gum vine (*Aphanopetalum resinosum*), wonga vine (*Pandorea pandorana*)

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and slender grape (*Cayratia clematidea*) to form dense thickets in sheltered locations.

## Distribution

Western Sydney Dry Rainforest occurs most commonly in the southern section of the Cumberland Plain, where it occurs on the sheltered lower slopes and gullies of steeply sloping rugged country, such as the Razorback Range near Picton. Outlying occurrences have been recorded at Grose Vale and Cattai. Western Sydney Dry Rainforest is now reduced to 338 ha which is 26.4% of its original distribution (NPWS 2002a, NPWS 2002b). Western Sydney Dry Rainforest occurs in the Fairfield, Camden, Penrith, Wollondilly and Hawkesbury local government areas.

## Examples to see

Good examples of Western Sydney Dry Rainforest can be seen at Fairfield City Farm, Abbotsbury and Mount Annan Botanic Garden.



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## Ecology

Western Sydney Dry Rainforest is a dry rainforest vegetation type,

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restricted to hilly country with sheltered gullies and cliff lines. It occurs on clay soils, derived from Wianamatta shale. Rainforest plants of Western Sydney Dry Rainforest are fire sensitive and dependent on the sheltered aspect and density of vegetation for protection. Western Sydney Dry Rainforest has high conservation value because of the presence of rainforest species in a relatively dry part of Sydney. The vine thicket vegetation provides good bird habitat and includes the endangered climber, *Cynanchum elegans*.

## Threats

Clearing and the removal of canopy trees have substantially reduced Western Sydney Dry Rainforest. The small size of the remnants has made them highly vulnerable to frequent fires and weeds, particularly African olive (*Olea europaea ssp africana*).

## Recovery and management

The recovery of this ecological community is being addressed as part of the Cumberland Plain

## For further information contact

Central Threatened Species Unit, NSW Department of Environment and Conservation, PO Box 1967, Hurstville NSW 2220 Phone 02 9585 6678. [www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au](http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au)

## References

Benson, D.H. and Howell, J. (1990) Taken for Granted: The Bushland of Sydney and Its Suburbs, Kangaroo Press, Sydney.

Benson, D.H. and Howell, J. (2000) Sydney's Bushland — More than Meets the Eye, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney.

James, T. McDougall, L. and Benson, D.H. (1999) Rare Bushland Plants of Western Sydney, second edition, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney.

NPWS (2002a) Native Vegetation of the Cumberland Plain - Final Edition, NPWS, Sydney.

NPWS (2002b) Interpretation Guidelines for the Native Vegetation Maps of the Cumberland Plain, Western Sydney, Final Edition, NPWS, Sydney.

Endangered Ecological Communities Recovery Plan, which is currently being drafted.

Because of its highly restricted distribution, Western Sydney Dry Rainforest remnants will be identified in the recovery plan and recommended for protection through a range of mechanisms including reservation, environmental protection zoning and development control processes. Other protection measures can be through plans of management and voluntary conservation agreements. These measures will enable the remnants to be better managed for conservation and vegetation corridors to be formed. Most remnants of Western Sydney Dry Rainforest are on private land and woody weeds need to be controlled to allow natural regeneration. Canopy trees need to be retained to maintain the sheltered conditions of this ecological community. Western Sydney Dry Rainforest should be identified in local fire management plans to avoid frequent control burning.

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