

VINY HARDWOOD 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.

Viny Hardwood Forest

Thick rainforest with lots of Samson's sinew vine in the Mission Road area.

This community occurs at a low altitude on the south-western flanks of the mountains and extends towards the coast. Remnants include the Botanic Gardens and some north of Mission Road. While most has been cleared, several key species appear to indicate its previous limits. The key indicator species are large old whitewood trees (*Celtis paniculata*) and the robust Samson's sinew vine (*Callerya australis*).

Whitewood is a large and spectacular tree with white to grey trunks that are often buttressed at the base. Clusters of green flowers can be seen in summer, after which a small round fruit is produced.

The vine, Samson's sinew, often appears as large woody coils hanging from the tops of trees. Its springtime flowers are cream-coloured, sometimes with a bluish tint. They are followed by thick bean-like velvety pods.



Viny Hardwood Forest in the Norfolk Island Botanic Garden. Photo: Kevin Mills

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| Plant community | Key species | Other species | Threatened species |
|----------------------|---|---|--|
| Viny Hardwood Forest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whitewood (<i>Celtis paniculata</i>) Samson's sinew (<i>Callerya australis</i>) Bastard ironwood (<i>Planchonella costata</i>) Bloodwood (<i>Baloghia inophylla</i>) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norfolk pine (<i>Araucaria heterophylla</i>) Native oleander (<i>Pittosporum bracteolatum</i>) Ironwood (<i>Nestegis apetala</i>) Whiteywood (<i>Melictyus ramiflorus</i>) Beech (<i>Myrsine ralstoniae</i>) Prickly shieldfern (<i>Arachnoides aristatum</i>) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achryanthes (<i>Achryanthes arborescens</i>) Whiteywood (<i>Melictyus ramiflorus</i>) Meryta (<i>Meryta latifolia</i>) Beech (<i>Myrsine ralstoniae</i>) Native oleander (<i>Pittosporum bracteolatum</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

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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.