

Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest

Conservation Status

Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest is listed as an endangered ecological community under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*.



NPWS/M. Cufer 2001

Description

Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest is an open forest community and the dominant canopy trees are turpentine (*Syncarpia glomulifera*) and grey ironbark (*Eucalyptus paniculata*). Common understorey shrubs include sweet pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*), hop bush (*Dodonaea triquetra*), elderberry panax (*Polyscias sambucifolia*) and sickle wattle (*Acacia falcata*). In open grassy areas, kangaroo grass (*Themeda australis*) and blady grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) are common.

Distribution

Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest is restricted to the inner western suburbs of Sydney on Wianamatta shale. It originally extended over 26,000 hectares west to Guildford, and north of Parramatta River from Ryde to Castle Hill. It also occurs on the shale ridge caps in the Hornsby Plateau. Today, Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest is reduced to 4.5 percent its original extent, surviving as small remnants in the Baulkham Hills, Parramatta and Bankstown areas and it is considered critically endangered (NPWS 2002a, NPWS 2002b). Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest occurs in the Auburn, Bankstown, Baulkham Hills, Concord, Hawkesbury, Hornsby, Kogarah, Parramatta and Ryde local government areas.

Examples to see

Good examples can only be seen in small reserves, such as Wallumatta Nature Reserve and Newington Nature Reserve.

Ecology

Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest occurs on fertile soils in an area of moderate rainfall. It is transitional between Cumberland Plain Woodland in drier areas and Blue Gum High Forest on adjacent higher rainfall ridges. As a transitional community, the species composition varies according to the influence of sandstone and aspect.

Threats

In the early years of European settlement, Sydney Turpentine-

Ironbark Forest was heavily cleared for farming and timber, followed by suburban development as Sydney expanded. The biggest threat remains clearing and other threats are damage from recreational activities, rubbish dumping, grazing, mowing and weeds. The remnants are highly susceptible to weeds, such as privet (*Ligustrum spp*).

Recovery and management

The recovery of this ecological community is being addressed as part of the Cumberland Plain Endangered Ecological Communities Recovery Plan, which is currently being drafted.

High conservation value remnants of Sydney Turpentine-Ironbark Forest 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. Because of the small size of the remnants, weeds and the nutrient-rich runoff from adjacent urban areas should be controlled, especially on the edges.

Absence of fire has resulted in the dominance of *Pittosporum undulatum* in the understorey and the long-term loss of other species. Where natural bushfire cycles cannot be reinstated, *Pittosporum* may be controlled to maintain species diversity.

For further information contact

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References

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