



**Mossvale Park**  
**Living collection**  
**management plan**  
**2024 - 2029**



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We would like to acknowledge the Gunaikurnai People as the Traditional Owners of the land on which Mossvale Park is situated and pay respect to Elders past, present, and future. We would like to recognise their continuing connection to the land, water, air and sky, acknowledging that sovereignty was never ceded.

## FOREWORD

This living collection management plan was developed by the Friends of Mossvale Park in consultation with the Shire of South Gippsland who are the parks custodians. The living collection in Mossvale Park consists of mainly trees and shrubs and is therefore an arboretum, which is a botanic garden specializing in trees and woody plants. Arboreta across the globe conduct scientific research and conservation, engage in public outreach and education, and manage beautiful and diverse tree collections.

Our aim for our arboretum is to add to the historic, aesthetic and social significance of South Gippsland Shire. Historically, Mossvale Park is important as an example of 19th century landscaping that demonstrates how European settlement and development of this area sought to radically modify the natural and cultural landscape. It is also notable for its development as an important regional park in the post war period and for its associations with Francis Moss and the former Moss Vale Nursery. Aesthetically, Mossvale Park is distinguished by its many fine examples of mature exotic specimen trees, which together with the remnant indigenous vegetation, create an area of exceptional landscape quality that is unique within the Shire. Socially, Mossvale Park is an important part of the identity of the Berry's Creek area and is one of most well-known and best-loved parks in the South Gippsland region.

This plan is a living document that will be reviewed every five years. Actions arising from the plan will prioritise the time and efforts of the volunteers that support the park and lead to enhanced outcomes.

The Friends of Mossvale Park

August 2024



## OUR VISION

To promote the botanic and historic characteristics of Mossvale Park and foster the interest of members of the community in the Park and in plants and flora generally through education, volunteerism and fellowship.

## INTRODUCTION

The collection of plants that comprises Mossvale Park has great significance to the history, cultural and botanical character of South Gippsland.

Originally part of the great Gippsland Forest and home to the Gunaikurnai people our park is situated within a one kilometre meander of the Tarwin River West branch.

The park was part of the Moss Vale plant nursery where deciduous and coniferous trees were propagated and grown for sale in the late 1800's. Left over nursery stock was planted on the Tarwin River flats adjacent to the then entrance to the property. These over 100 year old trees form the framework of the park and are beloved by the community. Since Mossvale Park became a public reserve in 1946 successive committees of management have added to and maintained the European park aesthetic.

More recently the riverbanks have been restored, with the weedy deciduous tree suckers removed and replaced with natural regeneration and careful planting of endemic riparian vegetation. Not only do the endemic plants support a range species that depend on the river for habitat, they also provide weather protection and a dense green backdrop to highlight the specimen plantings.



## 1. LIVING COLLECTIONS

### 1.1 About our Living Collection

The collection of species in Mossvale Park is predominantly woody species. Deciduous and coniferous plants were imported into Australia by Francis Moss a nurseryman from Buninyong in Victoria and later Moss Vale Park in Berrys Creek and Leongatha. Moss selected plants carefully, seeking specimens that thrived in Australian conditions. Prominent in the nursery trade, Moss contributed specimens to botanical gardens in Buninyong and Ballarat and many specimens from the Leongatha nursery are still thriving in the local district, including the oaks and elms of the Leongatha Avenue of Honour. Moss is famous for his work with apple understock, trailing, breeding and selecting varieties that were blight free. He is also responsible for the propagation and market development of the Ballarat apple – Stewart’s seedling. We have examples of Moss apple varieties at the entrance to the park maintaining our connection to the Moss nurseries and keeping the heritage story alive.

Since becoming a public park in 1946 the committee of management have added to the collection in the park with many notable specimens. Many have been donated by the Moss family, who are still in the nursery trade.

The native trees are remnants of the original bushland and include examples of Strzelecki Gums, which are endemic to the Strzelecki Ranges and have been identified as endangered.

Among the many fine examples of deciduous trees are three that have been included on the Register of Significant Trees compiled by the National Trust as outstanding examples of their species in terms of size, spread and circumference. They are a Chestnut Leafed Oak (*Quercus castaneifolia*) This is considered to be an outstanding example in terms of its spread and circumference and is situated near the Forrester pavilion; a London Plane (*Platanus x acerifolia*) This is considered to be an outstanding example in terms of its spread and circumference and is situated adjacent to the sound shell and an Oriental Plane (*Platanus orientalis*). This is considered to be an outstanding example in terms of its spread and circumference and is situated next to the rear gateway leading to the adjoining private property. The Friends of Mossvale park have nominated three more specimens to the National Trust for consideration, the two elms next to the playground (*Ulmus proceara* and *U. minor* ‘variegata’ ) and our Californian plane (*Plantanus racemosa*).

### 1.2 Aims of our Living Collections Strategy

#### Aim 1.

Maintaining our collection of plants with the objective of protecting plant diversity. Areas of focus include the historical plant collection and the indigenous endemic flora on the Tarwin River Bank.

## **Aim 2.**

Maintaining plants in our collections to ensure they are in good health and are displayed in ways that both highlight the specimens and work harmoniously with the overall planting plan.

## **Aim 3.**

Providing information to improve community knowledge of our plants. Maintaining a collection database that is publicly available. Researching the history of the Park and the people associated with it and making this information available to the public to enrich our cultural knowledge. Working with the Traditional owners to explore the endemic plants important to their culture.

## **Aim 4.**

Making all the information about our plants that we have available to the public to increase understanding of plant biology and ecology. We aim to work towards having all of our significant plants labelled.

### **1.3 Strategic Goals and Action Plan**

The Friends of Mossvale Park have continued to add to the collection by continuing the theme of the Moss plantings, propagating specimens from the Moss era genetic material when original plants fail due to age or environment. Along with restoring parts of the riverbanks we have developed a Magnolia garden showcasing locally bred and developed cultivars.

At the Friends Annual General Meeting goals and action planning for the following year is discussed and accepted. The goals and actions of the group form part of the meeting minutes and are published on the Friends of Mossvale Park's website; [www.mossvalepark.com](http://www.mossvalepark.com).



## 2 CURRENT LIVING COLLECTIONS

### 2.1 Collections Overview

Our living collection includes exotic deciduous and exotic and native Australian coniferous plants. In the riparian areas we have establish endemic native species for conservation and educational purposes.

### 2.2 Collections Themes

Our collection has the following themes

- Original Moss Nursery plantings
- Australian native plants endemic to the Mossvale Park area. The Ecological Vegetation Classes for our park are EVC 83 Swampy Riparian Woodland and EVC 29 Damp Forest – Strzelecki Ranges bioregion. Both these EVC’s are listed as Endangered.
- Other Australian native species
- Coniferous plants
- Camellias with a focus on Australian bred specimens
- Magnolias with a focus on locally bred specimens

### 2.3 Collection documentation

Details of the living collection are kept of a database ([stored in Google documents](#)) and available on our website for of all of our specimen plants. Information included if known is species, common name, GPS coordinates, origin of the species geographically and details of where the specimen was sourced from. This database is updated as often as necessary, with ongoing assessment to ensure material is accurately named and authenticated. New acquisitions are added to the database when plantings are established.

### 2.4 Collections Quality

Criteria for addition of a plant to the living collection

- A plant considered for accession should add meaningfully to the comprehensiveness of the collection or the aesthetic, historic, or scientific attributes of the site.
- Accession and management of the plant should fit within the park's staff time, building and land facilities, equipment capacity, and financial resources.

- The plant should be reasonably appropriate to the cultural attributes of the site (e.g., drought or flood tolerant as needed, and adaptable to local temperature extremes, soils, and levels of insolation and exposure).
- The plant, if non-native, should not carry significant risk of becoming invasive beyond the reasonable capacity of the staff to control recruitment. Plants additions should not be on the list of noxious or environmental weeds
- Trees, and genera consisting primarily of trees, will be given priority in the development of the park's collections. Shrubs, vines, and herbaceous plants will be incorporated into the landscape design for environmental or wildlife habitat and may be included for conservation or study purposes.
- Plants should have a known provenance, with endemic species grown from locally collected seed. The seed collection should be licenced in accordance with all legislation. Exotic species should be sourced from nurseries that can give the plant provenance if possible.





### 3 COLLECTIONS PRIORITIES

#### 3.1 Care and maintenance: thriving, nurtured collections

- The trees in Mossvale park are audited regularly.
- Maintenance of the plants will be undertaken by and under the direction of the South Gippsland shire council referring to 'The tree management plan 2021' and any plan updates.
- The Friends of Mossvale park will provide volunteer labour, visitor assistance, and fund-raising. Gifting of plants or other donations to augment collections will be considered through the Friends organisation with oversight from the Shire of South Gippsland Open spaces team.
- Volunteer activities will be implemented to foster the interest of members in the Park and in plants and flora generally through education, volunteerism and fellowship, and to aid and support the maintenance of the park.



## 4 VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Our aim in preparing this management plan is to create a vision for the preservation and enhancement of our collection. We hope that the community gets as much enjoyment and engagement from our park and the collection over the next hundred years as they have from the last.

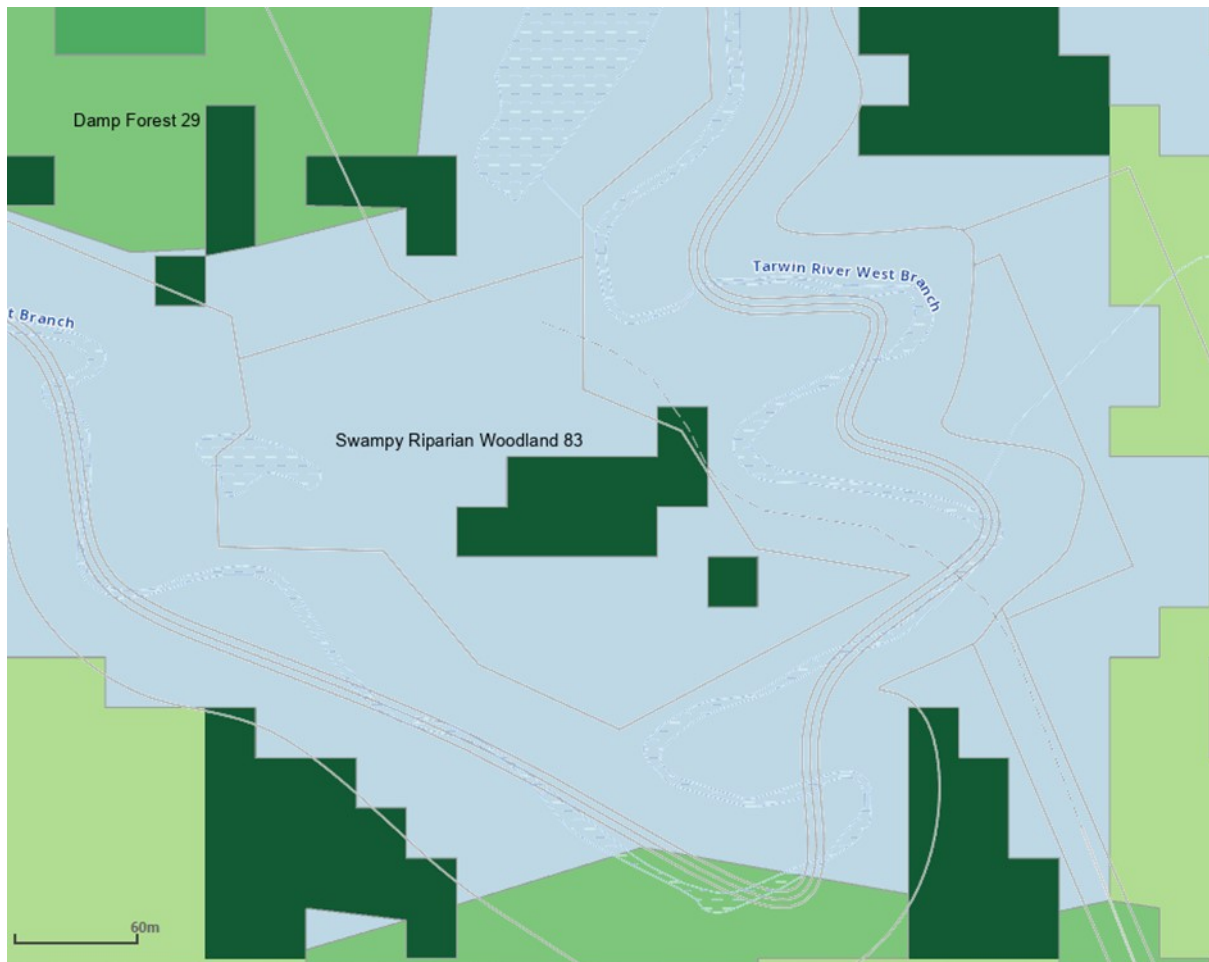
- We will work towards labelling our outstanding specimens to further education and appreciation of the plants.
- We will continue to work towards improving access to all parts of the park with paths and defined trails.
- We will consult with the community to make the park accessible to all both physically and educationally.



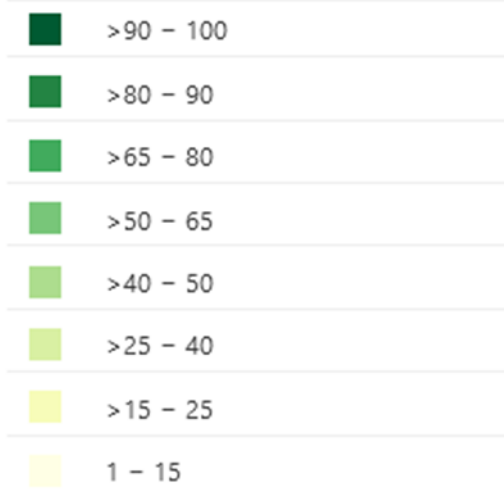
## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1.

EVC map of the Mossvale Park are taken from Nature Kit



#### — Strategic Biodiversity Values





## The Friends of Mossvale Park

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