EUCALYPT OPEN FOREST AND WOODLAND

Two types of eucalypt community can be observed. Those dominated by Ironbark (Eucalyptus crebra) and those where this species is a minor component or completely absent.

Ironbark communities are common on the rather infertile lowhills and rises, where the soils are shallow and stony. Where it is the dominant species, there is little, if any, shrub layer and the grass layer is commonly sparse. Grey gum (Eucalyptus punctata) and Lemon-scented gum (Corymbia citriodora) are also common upper story species with Pink Bloodwood (Corymbia intermedia).

There is no mid-storey, but there is a diverse understorey including Acacia conferta, Hopbush (Dodonaea viscosa subsp. burmmoniana), and Lemon-scented gum. Grasses were mainly Black speargrass (Heteropogon contortus), Blady grass (Imperata cylindrica) and Themeda australis as well as BothriochLoa, Dicanthium, Rhynchelytrum and Stipa. However, a number of annual grasses are also present.

No rare or endangered species are known to occur in BITS. Soil moisture, as influenced by topography, soil type and aspect, appears to be the major influence on species dominance in the Eucalpt communities.

On the steep ridges behind the Boyne Island township, aspect has a very noticeable effect on species distribution. Whilst similar to other parts of the area, Queensland peppermint (Eucalyptus exerta), Acacia species including (A. conferta, A. leocalyx, A. aulococarpa), Grass tree (Xanthorrhoeajohnsonsii), Medicinebush (Coelospermum reticulatum) and Soap tree (Alphitonia excelsa) are also present. Many of these are pioneering species, and are indicative of the disturbance which has occurred as a result of severe fires through this area in recent years.

Blue gum (Eucalyptus tereticornis) is present in the moister environments and on the lower slopes and is often mixed with C. intermedia and E. polycarpa.

SWAMP COMMUNITY

These Melaleuca dominated communities can be divided into two associations:

(i) Creek Bank Communities. These are dominated by M. nervosa and M. argentea forming narrow bands along the water courses. M. quinquenervia and M. leucadendron are also found in the damp marginal areas.

(ii) Swamp communities. These are represented by M. quinquenervia in low lying swamp areas forming pure stands (open forest) with no shrub layer but with occasional Lophostermon and various members of Cyperacea. These communities are found in deep sandy soil with high organic matter and permanent water.

Several sections of these Melaleuca swamps have been reclaimed by residential development.

DISTURBANCES

Disturbance associated with selective clearing for grazing has been significant in the Gladstone area, including Boyne Island, as evident from historical aerial photographs.

However, early disturbed areas have also regrown since that time. These areas are characterised by large numbers of Acacia species which form a mid-layer to 3 metres with species such as Dogwood (Jacksonia scoporia). Sandpaper fig (Ficus), Quinine bush (Petalostigmmapubescens) and Medicine bush. The climber, Stinking Passion Flower is common as are Lomandra and a variety of annual grasses, as well as Blady grass, Black speargrass and Cobblers pegs (Bidenspilosa). There were very few large trees remaining.

In the creek lines, the soils are moister and Brushbox (Lopophostemon confertus) replaces Lemon scented gum, and species such as Cheese tree (Glochidion lobocarpwn). Foam bark tree (Jagerapseudorhus), Paperbark (Melaleuca
nervosa), Grass tree (Xanthorrhoea johnsonii). Soap tree and Cosuarina are common with the reed Typhus present as is the Umbrella tree (Schefflera actinophyUa).