



WILDFLOWER SOCIETY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA (Inc)

Principles of Flora Conservation

Preamble

The activities of human beings necessarily interact with the natural world. Since the industrial revolution, human activities have modified our global environment giving us uncertainties of climate change, acid rain, ozone depletion, extensive loss of natural ecosystems, disease and pollution to mention a few.

The loss of species is an advance sign of the accelerated destruction of natural ecosystems. We need to address this decline urgently. We all need to manage our activities and developments with much greater care and sensitivity towards other living things.

A key part is keeping people in contact with natural vegetation. This opportunity still exists in the Wildflower State of WA unlike in many places around the world.

But much needs to be done to educate the community, politicians and decision makers if we are to halt the loss of bushland and the decline in biodiversity in our own backyard.

The Wildflower Society of WA believes that the conservation of our remaining bushland heritage is of paramount importance. The philosophy of conservation of the beautiful and unique wildflowers of the West is encapsulated in these ten principles of flora conservation. They were officially adopted by the Society at its 1991 State Conference with minor changes since. These principles remain as relevant today as they did in 1991.

1. HERITAGE

Wildflowers are our natural heritage held in trust for our future generations. We have no right to destroy species.

2. ECOLOGY

Natural bushland is quintessential to this heritage. Human beings cannot reproduce the complexity and diversity of species and their ecology that have evolved over millions of years.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

Human beings are the ultimate custodians of life. We have the ability to destroy life, so must therefore assume the responsibility to preserve life. This responsibility lies with all levels of society: individual, community, government and corporate.

4. INTRINSIC VALUE

All bushland has intrinsic value. The value of the life of any species cannot be measured in dollars.

5. BOTANY

The systematic botanical surveying of our flora and vegetation is essential. The undescribed flora requires urgent but rigorous scientific attention.

6. PRESERVATION

- Flora conservation embraces the preservation of the ecology of vegetation types. Reserves, whether public or private, should be ecologically viable and interconnected to allow the continued movement of species and hence future evolution and adaptation and long-term survival. Nevertheless, all reserves are worthy of preservation.
- The ecological integrity of reserves is inviolate. The notion of exploration and mining in reserves is scientifically and morally unjustifiable.

7. RARE AND ENDANGERED SPECIES AND COMMUNITIES

Rare communities and natural habitats of rare and endangered species must be preserved. Cultivation in gardens does not facilitate continuing biodiversity and species evolution.

8. HUMAN IMPACT

Human actions are changing the world and have impact on the flora. Changes include the Greenhouse Effect, acid rain (just two of the many aspects of climate change), land clearance and the introduction and spread of weeds and diseases (dieback, myrtle rust etc.). The greatest potential for survival in the face of these human impacts lies with the most genetically diverse and healthy natural populations of flora.

9. EDUCATION

The community has a right to know about, care about and enjoy our floral heritage. Community involvement and education are conducive to caring and enjoyment. Our children have the same rights. Furthermore, all children have the right of access to bushland within walking distance of home and school.

10. CULTIVATION

Cultivation of wildflowers in gardens enables people to study and enjoy our flora, and lessen impact on our environment. The commercial picking of wildflowers and collection of seed and cuttings from bushland are incompatible with flora conservation. The commercial production of wildflowers and seed is therefore necessarily based on cultivation.