

## Wandoo twice as hard as Jarrah

**Julimar Conservation and Forest Alliance (JCAFA)**

Wayne Clarke

THE WANDOO tree (*Eucalyptus wandoo*) or White Gum, one of Western Australia's most striking gum trees, growing to a height of 20 to 30 metres, is noted for its hardness.

The Janka Rating scale is a hardness rating created by American researcher Gabriel Janka (1864-1932).

The Janka Rating measures the resistance of a sample of wood to denting and wear.

Wandoo is one of the top three hardest timbers of Australia when measured by the Janka hardness test.

Wandoo is twice as hard as Jarrah (*E. marginata*), and of comparable hardness to Grey Ironbark (*E. paniculata*).

Australia's hardest timber – and possibly the world's hardest – is the Bull-oak (*Allocasuarina luehmannii*) of eastern Australia.

Wandoo is a first-class structural timber and was used extensively for railway sleepers, particularly in the goldfields.

It is considered superior to Jarrah as it does not warp.

It is listed as 'Vulnerable' with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

It was once widespread throughout the south-west but now only around 5% of the tree's habitat remains.

Wandoo is an important tree for both nature conservation and apiarists.

Mature trees form hollows that provide habitat for a range of birds and animals including the Carnaby and Baudin's Black Cockatoos, the Purple-crowned Lorikeets, bats and possums.

Fallen hollow logs provide homes for chuditch, echidnas and a range of reptiles.

During the flowering period they are often rich in nectar producing a high-grade honey.

The honey is reputed to boost immune systems, has a low GI and has high antimicrobial properties.

Wandoo is an important source of income for the bee-keeping industry.

Julimar was once considered a significant Wandoo woodland, but it has been eroded over the years with the timber used for pig iron production (Wundowie Iron and Steel) and for Toodyay's Industrial Extracts operations.

The Julimar Conservation and Forest Alliance is proposing protection for the remaining stands of wandoo to be conserved and preserved in a National Park.



*A Wandoo stand in Julimar Forest.*