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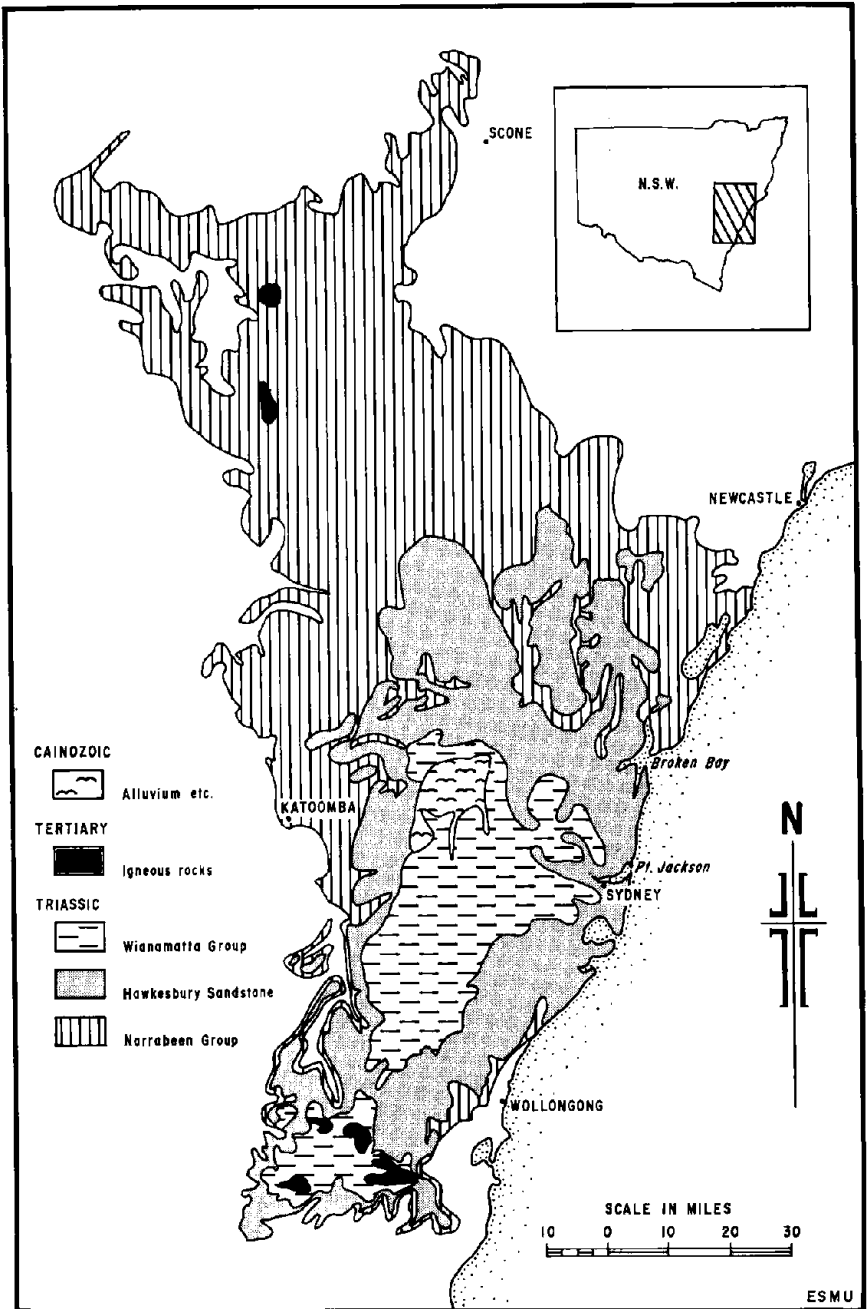


Photography by Frank Hurley

Blocks by courtesy of John Sands Pty. Ltd.

THE HONEY FLOWER—*Lambertia formosa*

SYDNEY'S WILDFLOWERS



MAP OF THE TRIASSIC ROCK SEQUENCE OF THE SYDNEY BASIN

I am indebted to the School of Earth Sciences, Macquarie University, for preparing the map of the Triassic rock sequence of the Sydney Basin and to Betty Maloney for the illustrations of a number of the species described.—A. Blombery.

HAWKESBURY SANDSTONE FLORA

by A. M. Blombery

The Hawkesbury Sandstone, which is part of the Triassic rock sequence of the Sydney Basin, produces some of the most colourful flora on the eastern coast of New South Wales. There are a large number of plant species admirably suited to cultivation; a number of these species extend beyond the Hawkesbury Sandstone and, in some cases, to other states of Australia.

The Triassic rocks of the basin extend from approximately the Shoalhaven River, some 100 miles south of Sydney, to near the Hunter River, 100 miles north of Sydney and 100 miles westward to Lithgow. The Triassic sequence consists of 3 main rock groups: the Narrabeen Group, which is the oldest, the Hawkesbury Sandstone, which, when present, overlies the Narrabeen sandstones and shales and underlies the shales of the Wianamatta Group. The approximate limits of the three groups are shown in the attached sketch, Fig. 1.

- (1) The Narrabeen Group consists chiefly of sandstone interbedded with clays, shales and conglomerates. The sandstone closely resembles the Hawkesbury Sandstone from which it is sometimes almost indistinguishable.
- (2) The Hawkesbury Sandstone consists chiefly of quartz grains cemented by clay or limonite (iron hydroxide).
- (3) The Wianamatta Group is composed chiefly of shale and clay with subsidiary sandstone.

The Wianamatta Group is found chiefly west and south-west of Sydney; and where it has been eroded away there are outcrops of Hawkesbury Sandstone. The Hawkesbury Sandstone is common in Sydney and its environs, where there are extensive areas exposed, particularly to the northern, north-west and southern parts. The northern limits of this sandstone is some 80 miles north of Sydney to near Lake Macquarie, 60 miles west to the Blue Mountains and 100 miles south to the Shoalhaven River. The sandstone which is of a yellowish colour weathers to most attractive colours of reds and browns, due to the presence of iron; numerous lichens and mosses which grow on these rocks add to the colourful appearance of the sandstone.

Growing on these Triassic rocks is a wide range of plants, varying from large forest trees and shrubs on the heavy Wianamatta clays, graduating to smaller species on the Narrabeen group, to lower-growing shrubs and often stunted trees of the Hawkesbury Sandstone. It is amongst these small shrubs where the most colourful species occur.

The Hawkesbury River with its bays and tributaries dissects the sandstone into numerous gullies and ridges; this river, which flows into the ocean approximately 30 miles north of Sydney, extends in a westerly and south-westerly direction, extending to the limits of the Sydney Basin. The sandstone is further intersected by Port Jackson on which Sydney is situated, and the Georges River and Port Hacking to the south.

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This issue is devoted to wildflowers of the Sydney region and their garden cultivation.

