

March 2008 Field Trip to Big Badja in
the Deua National Park



Big Badja View East



Dianella tasmanica



Eucalyptus fracinoides



Goodenia hederacea alpine



Grevillea oxyantha



Big Badja group at summit



Mastighapha crassicornis



Unkown species

As one of the ANPS Field Trip party I've waited 35 years to get to Big Badja Hill since first arriving in Canberra and I wasn't disappointed by this trip. The summit is not particularly high but it does rise about 50m above the razorback Kybean range, provides 360 views as far as the Snowy Mtns, forms part of the Great Divide and is only a few hundred metres from the Badja firetrail which is open to 4WD.

Our group walked up the slowly ascending firetrail from Pikes Saddle to the summit, a distance of about 3 km. We started off in snowgum woodland (*E. pauciflora*) with a shrubby understorey of *Lomatia myricoides*, *Acrotiche divaricata* (in symmetrical hummocks), *Persoonia diversifolia*, *Platysace lanceolata* in flower and large patches of the groundcover *Goodenia hederaceae* var *alpina* along the trackside. The latter would make a good garden plant if the conditions for its cultivation were better known. The *Lomatia* occurred in several distinct leaf types that need further study. One surprise were the large numbers of male alpine stick-insects (*Didymura violescens*) wandering around. These feed on eucalypt leaves and often have outbreaks in the mountains. After about 1 km the vegetation suddenly changed to a spectacular white ash forest (*E. fraxinoides*), due probably to a change to deeper and more nutrient-rich soils. The trunks of the white ash are covered with characteristic insect scribbles. The understorey changed to a meadow of *Dianella tasmanica* covered in purple fruits. We then encountered a rock outcrop supporting a dense shrubbery of the Kybean Grevillea (*G. oxyantha*) and Lemon Bottlebrush (*Callistemon pallidus*). Near the turn

off to the summit the forest type changed again to a monoculture of peppermint (*Eucalyptus radiata*). The short trail to the summit emerged from the forest into a dense shrubbery of ti-tree (*Leptospermum lanigerum* and *L. obovatum*) as well as *Kunzea parvifolia* Badja carpet and other unidentified heaths. Although a hazy day we could see from the summit the Three Brothers on the Monaro to the south, parts of the Brindabella's to the west and Mother Woila and Mt Tabletop to the east.

After lunch we walked a further 1 km south along the razorback ridge to another lookout which provided a good view of the cliffs surrounding Mother Woila and the deep valley of Woila Creek and the Coastal Ranges. One of our party Bob Small noticed an attractive grasshopper climbing up his leg. It turned out to be *Mastighapha crassicornis* a species rarely seen and never before photographed.

More plant species would probably be found during an early summer visit when the heaths would be in flower.