

Rich in gold
and eucalyptus
history

Blue Mallee Trail



This 8km track takes you on a gentle ride over the sandstone ridges that make up a majority of the hills around Wedderburn.

The lower gullies were once full of gold prospectors looking for alluvial gold along the creeks and you can still see some of their diggings today. The higher ground is typically dense Mallee scrub made up of Blue Mallee, Green Mallee, Bull Mallee and the endangered Kamarooka Mallee. When the gold ran out in the late 1860s, a new industry was created using the oil from the leaves of the Mallee trees. Out of the nearly 1000 Eucalyptus species in Australia, the local Blue Mallee (*Eucalyptus polybractea*) is the one with the highest oil content. The Eucy oil industry became a viable business in Wedderburn.



The Blue Mallee is also important as a habitat tree, with many Honeyeaters and other birds and insects dependent on its nectar in the flowering season in autumn and winter. Large areas of the country you venture through are old harvesting crops for the oil industry. They are now regrowing as part of this forest since the oil production has moved onto private land elsewhere in the district.



Two sites are of particular interest along this track. Take a break at the old Eucy distillery and view the remains of the original boiler there. Notice the piles of Eucy mulch strewn around the place, indicating how much oil is still being produced around the district. For those interested in geology, the railway cutting just 50 metres east of the Wedderburn silos is a must see. Layer by layer, the rocks tell the story of the millions of years of sediment deposits forming the land around this area. From the lines in the rocks, geologists can tell this land once was under relatively deep water.



Wildflowers can mainly be found in late winter and throughout spring. The stocky Mallee Wattle dominates the understorey, and Australia's national floral emblem, the Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) colours the entire bush bright yellow. A few patches of undisturbed bush are home to some of the local orchids, like the Purple Beard-Orchid and the Yellow Rabbit-Ears.

For a more detailed story on the Eucalyptus oil industry, both historic and current, please also visit Hard Hill Reserve in Wedderburn and the Eucalyptus Museum in Inglewood.

Advice for cyclists and walkers



This is a grade 3 track. Users may encounter natural hazards such as steep slopes, unstable surfaces and minor water crossings. Users are responsible for their own safety. Trail is suitable for mountain and hybrid bikes.



Temperatures can be very high in summer: be sure to carry water and apply sunscreen. Beware of vehicles as this cycle track is on a shared road. Toilet facilities are located at Wedderburn's Travellers Rest in Chapel Street and Hard Hill Tourist Reserve.



Colour of trail marker for Blue Mallee Trail.



For further information on cycling tracks in Loddon contact the Loddon Visitor Information Centre 03 54943489 or Loddon Shire Council on 03 54941200. www.loddon.vic.gov.au

