

# Vegetation Community Profile

## Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca halmaturorum*) Low Open Forest (AP0023PE)

Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca halmaturorum*) Low Open Forest is associated with saline soils fringing coastal estuaries and drainage lines. Due to the dense Swamp Paperbark canopy, the understorey is very open and dominated by a heavy leaf litter layer. Relatively sparse samphire shrubs and other salt tolerant herbs and small shrubs form a very open shrub layer.

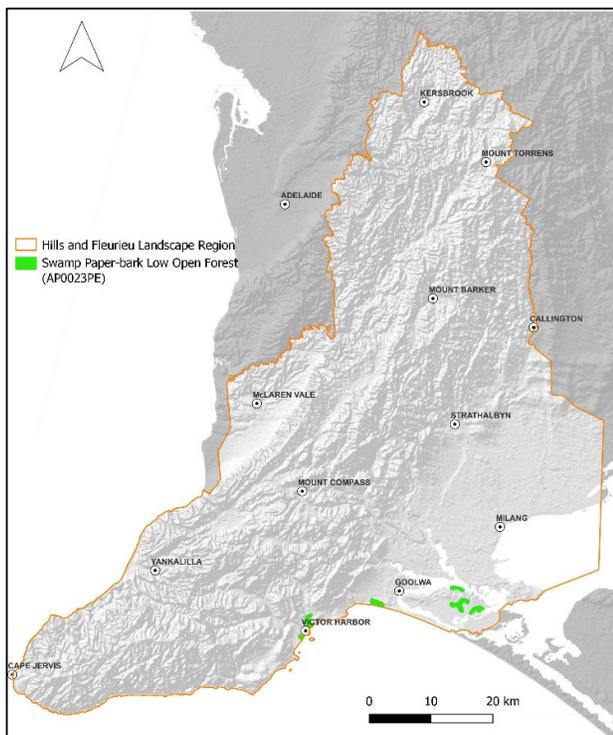


Figure 1: Pre-European mapping of Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca halmaturorum*) Low Open Forest community within Hills and Fleurieu Landscape region

### Distribution within the Hills and Fleurieu

Within the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape region, the pre-European distribution has been mapped along broad coastal estuaries/drainage lines at Victor Harbor and Goolwa, including occurrences on Hindmarsh Island bordering tidal channels. This community is likely to have had a naturally restricted distribution within the Hills and Fleurieu region, with 130 ha mapped as being present before European settlement.

Approximately 120 ha has been mapped in the Department for Environment and Water's extant mapping layer (Data SA 2025).



Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca halmaturorum*) Low Open Forest fringing samphire low shrubland. Goolwa (Source S Croft).

### Landform

Estuaries and seasonally inundated depressions, fringing lakes.

### Soil types

Saline clay soils.

### Rainfall

Approximately 470 mm to 530 mm annual rainfall.

### Revegetation

A table of plant species likely to have occurred in this community is provided at the end of this document. Please note that the list includes species likely to occur across the plant community's entire range within the Hills and Fleurieu Landscape region. There may be other plant species that occurred on your property with a more restricted distribution. A native plant nurseries list can be found on the Landscapes Hills and Fleurieu website.

## Vegetation structural layers

### Tree Layer

Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca halmaturorum*) is the sole dominant upper layer species, often forming a dense almost closed canopy. Swamp Paperbark may grow to 6 m or more tall in this region. Young trees are of multi-stemmed shrub-form but mature plants are of tree form.

### Shrub Layer

The shrub layer consists of small salt-tolerant shrubs dominated by samphires - *Salicornia* species and *Tecticornia* species (Jellinek *et al.* 2018). Other low to medium shrubs include Heathy Bluebush (*Maireana oppositifolia*) and Austral Seablite (*Suaeda australis*).

### Groundcover Layer

Leaf litter dominates the ground layer, with salt tolerant herbs and grasses sparsely present, and of relatively low diversity. Salt tolerant species include Round-leaved Pigface (*Disphyma crassifolium*), Emu-grass (*Distichlis distichophylla*), Salt Lawrencia (*Lawrencia spicata*), Tongue Plant (*Goodenia radicans*) and Creeping Brookweed (*Samolus repens*).



Very old Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca halmaturorum*) Low Closed Forest fringing the Inman River estuary at Victor Harbor (Source: S Croft 2024).

## Caring for Country and native vegetation

This vegetation community reflects the landscapes and ecosystems that existed at the time of European colonisation. First Nations peoples have cared for these lands for thousands of years, maintaining deep connections to Country through knowledge, culture, and stewardship. This guide supports efforts to understand, protect and restore native vegetation in a way that respects those enduring relationships.

Swamp Paperbark trees were of great value to the Ngarrindjeri people of the region. Its fibre and bark were used to create clothing and swaddle babies, its nectar was used in drinks, and the wood and stems were used to build tools and shelters (Botanic Gardens 2025).

## References

- Botanic Gardens (2025). Plant Selector. *Melaleuca halmaturorum*.  
<https://plantsselector.botanicgardens.sa.gov.au/Plants/Details/605>. Accessed May 2025.
- Data SA (2025). Native Vegetation Floristic Areas – NVIS – Statewide. *Government of South Australia*.  
<https://data.sa.gov.au/data/dataset/native-vegetation-floristic-areas-nvis-statewide>. Accessed April 2025.
- Jellinek, S, Croft, T and Te, T (2018). Terrestrial vegetation of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth Region. Chapter 3.3 in Mosley, L, Ye, Q, Shepherd, S, Hemming, S and Fitzpatrick, R (eds). Natural History of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth region (Yarluwar-Ruwe). pp 317 – 331. Royal Society of South Australia. *University of Adelaide*.

## Acknowledgment

We gratefully acknowledge the valuable work and research of the staff and volunteers of the South Australian Seed Conservation Centre and Botanic Gardens of South Australia. The information available on their public websites 'Seeds of South Australia' and affiliated 'www.szygium.xyz' has been widely referenced for the germination and propagation content of the Vegetation Community species lists.

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## Preferred way to cite this information

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When citing multiple profiles:

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## Swamp Paperbark (*Melaleuca halmaturorum*) Low Open Forest (AP023PE)

Scientific name	Common Name	Nursery Availability*	Propagation Method**	Seed Treatment***	Seed Propagation Difficulty****	Pollination	Links to further information
<b>TREE (cover &gt; 70%)</b>							
<i>Melaleuca halmaturorum</i>	Swamp Paper-bark	Y	S, C	N		Insect	<a href="https://edibleoz.com.au/products/south-australian-swamp-salt-paperbark-melaleuca-halmaturorum-bush-tucker-plant">https://edibleoz.com.au/products/south-australian-swamp-salt-paperbark-melaleuca-halmaturorum-bush-tucker-plant</a>
<b>MEDIUM AND TALL SHRUBS (combined cover 5 - 10%)</b>							
<i>Enchylaena tomentosa</i> var. <i>tomentosa</i>	Ruby Saltbush	Y	S, C	N, Fr, Sm		Wind	<a href="#">Enchylaena tomentosa - Australian Native Plants Society (Australia)</a>
<i>Maireana oppositifolia</i>	Heathy Bluebush	Y	S	N		Wind	<a href="https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Amaranthaceae/Maireana/Maireana_oppositifolia.html">https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Amaranthaceae/Maireana/Maireana_oppositifolia.html</a>
<i>Rhagodia candolleana</i> ssp. <i>candolleana</i>	Sea-berry Saltbush	Y	S, C	N		Wind	<a href="https://treeproject.org.au/seedlings/seaberry-saltbush/">https://treeproject.org.au/seedlings/seaberry-saltbush/</a>
<b>LOW SHRUBS (combined cover 1 - 5%)</b>							
<i>Salicornia quinqueflora</i> ssp. <i>quinqueflora</i>	Beaded Samphire	N	S, C	N		Wind	<a href="https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Amaranthaceae/Salicornia/Salicornia_quinqueflora_ssp._quinqueflora.html">https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Amaranthaceae/Salicornia/Salicornia_quinqueflora_ssp._quinqueflora.html</a>
<i>Suaeda australis</i>	Austral Seablite	N	C			Insect	<a href="https://aussiegreenthumb.com/seablite-suaeda-australis-bush-tucker-guide/">https://aussiegreenthumb.com/seablite-suaeda-australis-bush-tucker-guide/</a>
<i>Tecticornia indica</i> ssp.	Brown-head Samphire	N	S	N		Wind	<a href="https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Amaranthaceae/Tecticornia/Tecticornia_indica_ssp._leiostachya.html">https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Amaranthaceae/Tecticornia/Tecticornia_indica_ssp._leiostachya.html</a>
<b>MAT PLANTS (combined cover 1 - 5%)</b>							
<i>Carpobrotus rossii</i>	Native Pigface	Y	S, C	N		Insect	<a href="https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Aizoaceae/Carpobrotus/Carpobrotus_rossii.html">https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Aizoaceae/Carpobrotus/Carpobrotus_rossii.html</a>
<i>Disphyma crassifolium</i> ssp. <i>clavellatum</i>	Round-leaved Pigface	Y	S, C, D	N		Insect	<a href="https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Aizoaceae/Disphyma/Disphyma_crassifolium_ssp._clavellatum.html">https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Aizoaceae/Disphyma/Disphyma_crassifolium_ssp._clavellatum.html</a>
<b>TUSSOCK / SEDGES (combined cover &lt; 5%)</b>							
<i>Gahnia filum</i>	Thatching Grass	N	S, D	Bg		Wind	<a href="#">Search</a>
<i>Gahnia trifida</i>	Cutting Grass	Y	S, D	H, GA, Sm		Wind	<a href="https://aff.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Gahnia-report-final-draft.docx.pdf">https://aff.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Gahnia-report-final-draft.docx.pdf</a>
<b>TWINER/SCRAMBLERS (combined cover 1 - 2%)</b>							
<i>Einadia nutans</i> ssp. <i>nutans</i>	Climbing Saltbush	Y	S, C	N		Insect	<a href="https://www2.csu.edu.au/cgi-bin/herbarium/db/species-2.pl?ref=2033">https://www2.csu.edu.au/cgi-bin/herbarium/db/species-2.pl?ref=2033</a>

Scientific name	Common Name	Nursery Availability*	Propagation Method**	Seed Treatment***	Seed Propagation Difficulty****	Pollination	Links to further information
<i>Muehlenbeckia gunnii</i>	Climbing Lignum	N	C	N		Insect	<a href="https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Polygonaceae/Muehlenbeckia/Muehlenbeckia_gunnii.html">https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Polygonaceae/Muehlenbeckia/Muehlenbeckia_gunnii.html</a>
<i>Tetragonia implexicoma</i>	Bower Spinach	N	S, C	So		Insect	<a href="#">ggcn001_web_vfinal.pdf</a>
<b>HERBS (combined cover 1 - 5%)</b>							
<i>Centella asiatica</i>	Asian Centella						
<i>Frankenia pauciflora var. gunnii</i>	Sea-heath	N	S, C	N		Insect	<a href="#">Frankenia pauciflora var. gunnii</a>
<i>Goodenia radicans</i>	Tongue Plant	Y	S, C		D	Insect	<a href="#">VicFlora: Goodenia radicans</a>
<i>Hemichroa pentandra</i>	Trailing Hemichroa	N	C?			Insect	<a href="#">VicFlora: Hemichroa pentandra</a>
<i>Lawrenzia spicata</i>	Salt Lawrenzia	N	S	HW, Sc		Insect?	<a href="https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Malvaceae/Lawrenzia/Lawrenzia_spicata.html">https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Malvaceae/Lawrenzia/Lawrenzia_spicata.html</a>
<i>Pseudognaphalium luteoalbum</i>	Jersey Cudweed	N	0				<a href="https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Asteraceae/Pseudognaphalium/Pseudognaphalium_luteoalbum.html">https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Asteraceae/Pseudognaphalium/Pseudognaphalium_luteoalbum.html</a>
<i>Samolus repens</i>	Creeping Brookweed	N	S			Insect	<a href="https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Primulaceae/Samolus/Samolus_repens.html">https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Primulaceae/Samolus/Samolus_repens.html</a>
<i>Spergularia marina</i>	Salt Sand-spurrey	N	S			Insect	<a href="https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Caryophyllaceae/Spergularia/Spergularia_marina.html">https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Caryophyllaceae/Spergularia/Spergularia_marina.html</a>
<i>Suaeda australis</i>	Austral Seablite	N	C			Insects	<a href="https://aussiegreenthumb.com/seablite-suaeda-australis-bush-tucker-guide/">https://aussiegreenthumb.com/seablite-suaeda-australis-bush-tucker-guide/</a>
<i>Threlkeldia diffusa</i>	Coast Bonefruit	Y	S	Sm, So		Insect	<a href="https://www.cgg.wa.gov.au/profiles/cgg/assets/clientdata/documents/infrastructure/ggcn001_web_vfinal.pdf">https://www.cgg.wa.gov.au/profiles/cgg/assets/clientdata/documents/infrastructure/ggcn001_web_vfinal.pdf</a>
<i>Thyridia repens</i>	Creeping Monkey-flower					Insect	<a href="#">Thyridia repens</a>
<i>Triglochin striata</i>	Streaked Arrowgrass						<a href="#">Triglochin striata</a>
<i>Wilsonia rotundifolia</i>	Round-leaved Wilsonia	N	S, C	Sc			<a href="#">Search</a>
<b>GRASSES (combined cover &lt; 5%)</b>							
<i>Distichlis distichophylla</i>	Emu-grass	N	S, D			Wind	<a href="https://www.picturethisai.com/care/Distichlis.html">https://www.picturethisai.com/care/Distichlis.html</a>
<i>Puccinellia stricta</i>	Saltmarsh-grass	N	S, D	N		Wind	<a href="https://www.selinawamucii.com/plants/poaceae/puccinellia-stricta/">https://www.selinawamucii.com/plants/poaceae/puccinellia-stricta/</a>
<b>MISTLETOE</b>							
<i>Amyema melaleuca</i>	Tea-tree Mistletoe	N	S	N		Birds	<a href="https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Loranthaceae/Amyema/Amyema_melaleuca.html">https://syzygium.xyz/saplants/Loranthaceae/Amyema/Amyema_melaleuca.html</a>

If cells are blank, no information was readily available at the time of writing.

**\* Nursery Availability**

N = No

Y = Yes

**\*\* Propagation Method**

C = Cuttings

D = Division

S = Seedlings

***Seed Treatment Code	Treatment name	Procedure
Bg	Bog	Place seeds in water
Fr	Flesh Removal	Removal of fruit from seed coat
GA	Gibberelic Acid	
HW	Hot Water	Water just off the boil poured over the seed and allowed to stand for 8 - 24 hours
N	None	
Sc	Scarify	Mechanical abrasion of seed coat e.g. lightly scratch with sandpaper
Sm	Smoke	Soaking seeds in smoke water
So	Soak	Seed placed in rainwater for 24 hours

**\*\*\*\*Seed Propagation Difficulty**

D = Difficult