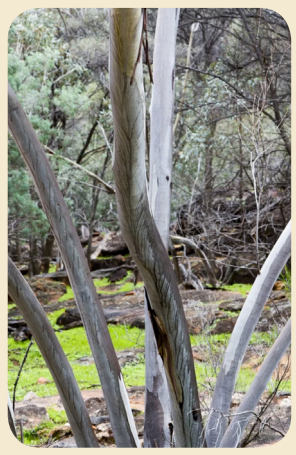
BURNT BUSHLAND NOT 'LOST'

HOW AUSTRALIAN NATIVES REGENERATE AFTER A BUSHFIRE

TREES WITH ROUGH BARK

Trees with rough bark, such as Red Stringy Bark have dormant growth buds deep beneath the bark which are protected from fire. When the tree is burnt and the foliage removed, the buds are triggered into life and they start to grow. Once these buds sprout, the tree then begins to regrow all the lost foliage, and gradually recovers in time.

LARGE UNDERGROUND ROOTS

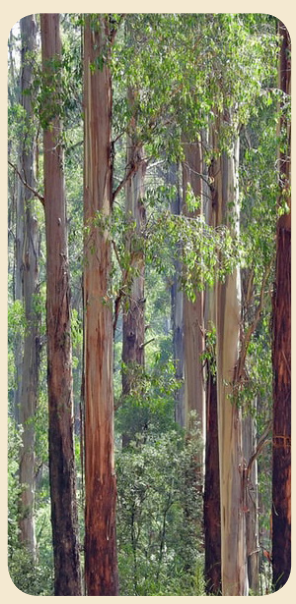


Some eucalypts regenerate from underground lignotubers which are large roots from which the tree can sprout new growth. Although the above-ground part of the tree may not survive, the lignotuber and root-system remains alive. In time, these trees will often develop multi-stem trunks and provide important habitat for local wildlife.

TREE FERNS AND GRASS TREES

Other plants such as Tree Ferns and Grass Trees have also developed ingenious ways to withstand bushfires, including dense, fibrous trunks. These plants simply reshoot and recover quite quickly. Many indigenous plants, including Grass Trees, rely on fire to remove the build up of leaves and dead material. Once burnt, flower-spikes, which will develop numerous seeds, are often the first sign that the Grass Tree is alive

SEEDS STORED IN GUM-NUTS



Other plants may not survive bush fires but have instead developed ways to ensure that their species will still persist into the future. A number of smooth barked eucalypt species, such as Mountain Ash, rarely survive bushfires and have instead evolved other ways to regenerate. Seeds stored in capsules (gum-nuts) in the treecanopy are released following fire, then germinate en-masse once conditions become favourable, ensuring the survival of the species.

ANTS BURY SEEDS DEEP IN SOIL

Wattle trees (Acacia species) have developed seeds with hard coats which are stored in the leaf litter and soil. Many of these seeds have been buried underground by ants busily building up food stores to feed their colonies. The heat of the fire cracks the seedcoats and triggers germination.

BURNT SOIL WILL HEAL

Burnt soil will eventually return to its pre-fire condition, but it could take up to a year to do so.

MOST EUCALYPTS HAVE A NUMBER OF SPECIALISED FEATURES THAT ENABLE RECOVERY FROM INTENSE FIRES. OUR NATIVES WILL COME UP THROUGH THE ASH AGAIN AND REGROW.