

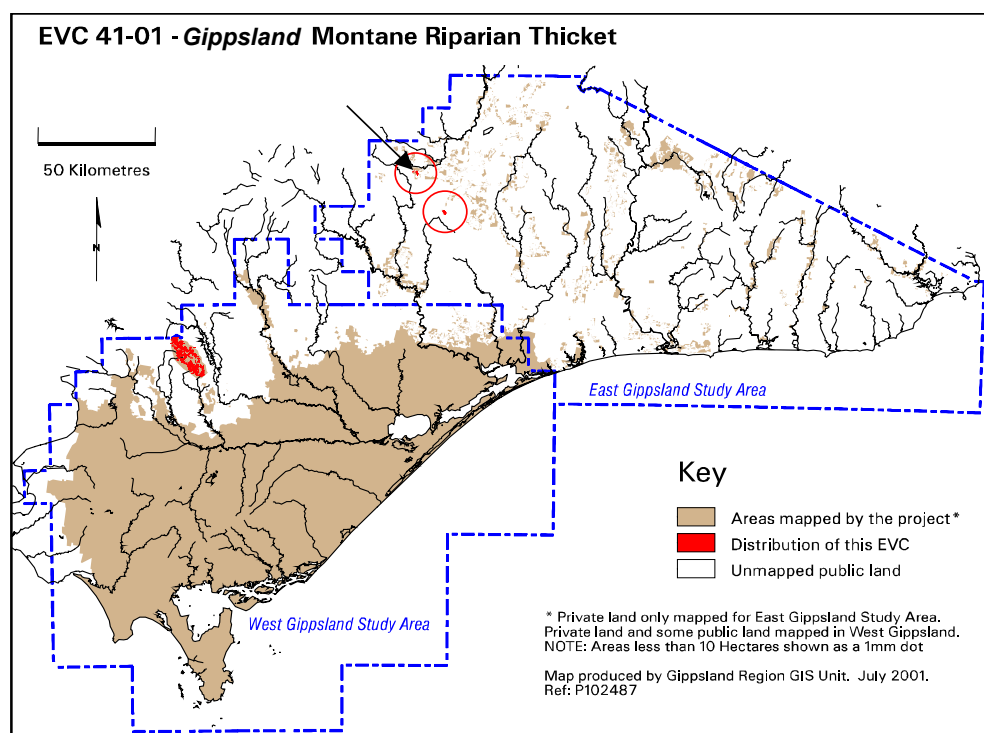
EVC 41 Montane Riparian Thicket

Occurs in montane and sub-alpine areas, often within Montane Damp Forest along drainage lines, streams with gentle gradients and in soaks at the heads of gullies on south-facing aspects. The waterlogged soils are colluviums or alluviums rich in organic matter. Although this EVC is found in areas of high rainfall, it derives much of its moisture from ground water. It is closed in structure, often forming a narrow, linear strip. The overstorey tree stratum is usually absent, often occurring only as overhang from adjacent Montane Damp Forest. The visually prominent closed scrub understorey is frequently shaded and many of the tall shrubs which flourish there are shade tolerant. Along the stream flats ferns are the common life form while sedges, grasses and forbs form a sparse but diverse ground layer.

Floristic Community 41-01 *Gippsland Montane Riparian Thicket*

Description below is from Gippsland RFA (Commonwealth of Australia and NRE, 1999). For a description of Montane Riparian Thicket at Baw Baw, refer to LCC (1991)

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| Elevation (metres above sea level) | Restricted to montane elevations above 1000m |
| Average rainfall p.a. (mm) | Areas of high rainfall |
| Topography | Wet sandy alluvial flats, along streams with gentle gradients and in soaks at the heads of gullies |
| Geology | Ordovician, granodiorite (Baw Baw) |
| Soils | Saturated gravelly sands |
| Related/adjacent EVCs/FCs | Montane Damp Forest |
| Present land use | Nature conservation and recreation |
| Present distribution | Baw Baw plateau and escarpment, East Gippsland |
| Total Area (ha)/ Number of polygons | 459/348 |
| Group analysis no. | Not available for East Gippsland Study Area |



Vegetation: structure/floristics:

The overstorey tree stratum is usually absent, usually only occurring as overhang from adjacent Montane Damp Forest. The most common of these eucalypts are Mountain Ash *Eucalyptus delegatensis*, Snow Gum *E. pauciflora* and Candlebark *E. rubida*. Silver Wattle *Acacia dealbata* and Blackwood *A. melanoxylon* may form a sparse understorey tree layer.

The tall shrub layer is visually most prominent, where Mountain Tea-tree *Leptospermum grandifolium* commonly forms an almost closed canopy three to four metres tall. A series of smaller shrubs are common components of this vegetation in East Gippsland, most notably Moth Daisy-bush *Olearia erubescens*, Alpine Daisy-bush *O. alpicola*, Mountain Baeckea *Baeckea utilis* and Drumstick Heath *Epacris breviflora*. Eastern Prickly Bush-pea *Pultenaea forsythiana* and Mountain Pepper *Tasmannia lanceolata* also occur and are common in the surrounding Montane Damp Forest.

The ferns are a major component of the ground layer vegetation. Alpine Water-fern *Blechnum pennamarina* is consistently present and is restricted and specific in its habitat preferences. Several other ferns are common including Fishbone Water-fern *Blechnum nudum*, Mother shield-fern *Polystichum proliferum* and Hard Water-fern *Blechnum watsii*.

Sedges, grasses and forbs form a sparse but diverse ground layer. Common graminoids include Tall Carex *Carex appressa*, Tasman Flax-lily *Dianella tasmanica*, Rush *Juncus sarophorus* and Club-sedge *Isolepis subtilissima* and the grasses Short Bent-grass *Deyeuxia brachyathera*, Bog Bent-grass *D. gunniana*, Tall Tussock-grass *Poa helmsii*, Fine-leaf Bent *Agrostis* sp. aff. *hiemalis*, Yorkshire Fog **Holcus lanatus*, Prickly Snow-grass *Poa costiniana*, Sword Tussock-grass *P. ensiformis*, Grey Tussock Grass *P. sieberiana* and Slender Tussock-grass *P. tenera*. Forbs are common and include Bidgee-Widgee *Acaena novae-zelandiae*, Mountain Cotula *Leptinella filicula*, Cinquefoil Cranesbill *Geranium potentilloides*, Hairy Pennywort *Hydrocotyle hirta*, Prickly Woodruff *Asperula scoparia*, Self-heal **Prunella vulgaris* and Forest/Subalpine Buttercup *Ranunculus plebius/scapiger*.