

MEDIA RELEASE

Our Ref: T15:0032

25 October 2011

Attention: News Editor

Floracopia springing to life

Thousands of native plants are beginning to spread their roots and soak up the spring sunshine at Whale World's spectacular Floracopia development.

Environmental scientist Jack Mercer has started to plant the 80 species chosen for Floracopia's centrepiece, a colourful array of plants drawn from four districts along the South Coast.

By next spring, Whale World's visitors will be able to learn about and appreciate the beauty of native plant species at Floracopia, which is supported by \$380,000 of Royalties for Regions funding through the Great Southern Regional Grants Scheme administered by the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC).

Mr Mercer, of Marlak Environmental, started cultivating plants for the display a year ago and said the planting would continue until summer.

"We are trying to propagate and plant some species that people haven't tried before," Mr Mercer said.

"Planting should be finished by Christmas, and by the spring of 2012 most of the plants should be half-height and flowering.

"All of the chosen plants will flower from about August through to January, and some will also display in autumn," Mr Mercer said.

Species were selected according to their district of origin, colour of flowers, maximum height of about a metre, and suitability for the hillside location behind Whale World.



Environmental scientist Jack Mercer with a tray of *Verticordia plumosa*, or plumed featherflower, ready to be planted at the Floracopia display.

The main Floracopia display will feature 20 species per district for each of Albany, Bremer Bay, Ravensthorpe and Esperance.

Each district will be represented by plantings in bands of colours from white, yellow, orange and red through to mauve and blue.

GSDC Chief Executive Officer Bruce Manning said the Jaycees Foundation project will build on Whale World's reputation as one of the region's key visitor attractions.

"As part of the Albany Biodiversity Park, the Floracopia development will provide more reasons for visitors to prolong their stay at Whale World," Mr Manning said.

"The grassed amphitheatre offers exciting possibilities as an outdoor venue for education and entertainment."

Media contact: Bruce Manning ph. 9842 4888