

Southern Beeches [Nothofagus] - rainforests in the cold



Nothofagus gunnii in fruit

The beech family [Fagaceae] - oaks, beeches and southern beeches - forms part of our collections. This family also has members in the tropics.



Red beech [Nothofagus fusca]

Nothofagus moorei fruits

Species of Nothofagus, or false beech, are found in an arc around the southern ocean; southern South America, New Zealand, Australia (including Tasmania), New Caledonia and Papua New Guinea, representing their ancient distribution in Gondwana.

All have seed similar to the northern hemisphere beech [Fagus]. A few species are deciduous and several have large leaves like the beech. However, the majority of species found in the warmer areas, are evergreen. Some were deciduous in earlier colder climate regimes.

Unique to Tasmania, the deciduous beech [Nothofagus gunnii], also known as fagus or tanglefoot, is the only temperate deciduous tree occurring naturally in Australia. The leaves turn a golden yellow in late April. This species grows only in wetter, high altitude forests that are free of fire. Its closest relative among the southern beeches is Nothofagus antarctica that grows in southern South America.

The similarities and differences of some of the cool temperate species of southern beech can be seen in Nothofagus Avenue, one of oldest plantings, just up the hill from here.

tanglefoot [Nothofagus gunnii] at Crater Lake, Tasmania



in autumn

in summer



Nothofagus gunnii



antarctic beech [Nothofagus moorei]



Southern Beeches [Nothofagus]

