

MT LOFTY BOTANIC GARDEN

APRIL 2022 WALK FROM THE LOWER CAR PARK



To help keep visitors COVID-19 safe we provide a copy on the Noticeboard at the Garden photographed to take with you or there is a downloadable version on our website (<https://www.friendsbgadelaide.com/guided-walks>)

This month's walk will especially suit visitors who would like a quick introduction to the Mt Lofty Botanic Garden, but are time poor or not wanting to be too energetic for we have taken a

Walk Around the Car Park

While standing by the parking ticket machine, first look across the road to where a colourful bed of tall pink and white **Cosmos** are creating a blaze of colour. Nearby are **Berberis thunbergii var. atropurpurea**, red-leaved Japanese barberry with eye-catching deep rose-red foliage, mottled with pink and white leaves. In mid-late spring tiny pale-yellow flowers appear but are insignificant in comparison to the foliage.

Cotoneaster franchetii, an attractive semi-deciduous low maintenance plant with orange berries is suitable for growing en-masse beneath trees in hard to grow areas. *Cotoneaster* is a genus of flowering plants in the rose family, Rosaceae, native to the Palearctic region (temperate Asia, Europe and north Africa). Towering above all these plants is a magnificent specimen of **Quercus coccinea** or scarlet oak. This large ornamental deciduous tree of pyramidal habit becomes more upright and spreading with age and will be spectacular later in autumn.

Alongside the ticket machine a tall deciduous **Liriodendron tulipifera**, tulip tree, can grow 120' tall. It takes its name from its greenish-yellow heartwood and attractive tulip-like flowers. The leaves also have a tulip shape and turn gold before falling.

Now walk over to the viewing platform, passing on your left a plaque noting the official opening of the Garden by South Australian Governor Sir Keith Seaman, KCVO, OBE, on 5th November 1977. Along the edge of the garden bed are variegated **Liriope sp.** with prominent blue and pink flowers, which thrive in this shady position.

Turning left, **Hibiscus syriaca**, the common garden hibiscus, is called "Rose of Sharon" in North America. In the family Malvaceae and native to much of Asia, it is the national flower of South Korea. Korea is compared poetically to the flower in the national anthem.

The small dark-leaved shrub, already colouring for autumn, is **Ugni molinae** or **Chilean guava**. It was first described by Juan Ignacio Molina (hence its name) in 1782. It was introduced to England in 1844 by the botanist and plant collector William Lobb, where its small plum coloured fruit became a favourite fruit of Queen Victoria for her breakfast marmalade.

Next, we find a plaque to honour Noel Lothian, the 6th Director of the Botanic Gardens. He argued for the establishment of a cool temperate garden in order to feature plants which were not able to be grown on the hot plains of Adelaide in the Adelaide Botanic Garden. This plaque was formerly on the Lothian Viewing Platform at the top of the garden, which gave a wonderful view across the garden and to the Piccadilly Valley. Unfortunately the viewing platform was falling into disrepair, and it was decided to remove it. A bright bed of Zinnia enhances the grey of the memorial.



You may be lucky to catch sight of the blue wrens which nest in the dense **Berberis x smithii 'Hancockii'** hedge surrounding the area. The bright blue plumage of the dominant male superb blue wren along with the brown and black non-breeding males and females can be seen bouncing around picking up tiny seeds and insects.

From the viewing platform can be seen the dam which was not constructed at the time the Garden opened but was dug out in 1979. It now holds 250 megalitres of water which can be used if needed in a bushfire.

On the skyline is a tower, "Carminow in Cornwall", reputed to have the highest foundations in South Australia. It was built in 1885 by Sir Thomas Elder as a summer retreat and bought after his death in 1897 by Sir Langdon Bonython. On the far side can be seen one of the Garden's four Greg Johns' sculptures called "Guardian Figures". His works are made of corten or austen steel which weathers to a rusty colour. He is represented by many works both in Australia and overseas. The trees on the hillside will be part of the annual display for autumn which draws thousands of visitors to the Garden each year.

Down to the right can be seen the trees of the 'wet arboretum', so called because it is planted with trees which don't mind boggy conditions which prevail here in winter. A beautiful large English oak, *Quercus robur* presides over the entrance to the viewing platform. It will be late to add its colour in autumn.

As we leave the platform, a large viburnum can be seen at the corner of a path leading left. It is *Viburnum x carlcephalum*, named for its cross between *Viburnum carlesii* and *Viburnum macrocephalum*. It has beautiful white fragrant spring flowers and now will turn vibrant red in autumn. Further along the parking area is a bed bright with red and white *Salvia microphylla* 'Hot Lips', clearly loved by bees, blue *Delphinium* with black 'eyes' and yellow *Rudbeckia*, all thriving in the sun. Next along is a tree with beautiful bronze coloured bark, *Amomyrtus luma*, commonly called luma. It is in the Myrtaceae or myrtle family and has white flowers not unlike a melaleuca, which is in the same family. This tree, however, is South American and its fruit, like the *Ugni*, may be used to make marmalade. A tall and elegant grass, *Miscanthus*, waves its flower heads in the breeze. This grass is generously planted in this area, especially down by the shore of the dam.

Further along to the right, are the bright blue/purple flowers of *Tibouchina urvilleana*, variously known as the princess flower or purple glory tree. This plant, native to Brazil, provides rich late autumn colour which contrasts with its rich green foliage. The specific epithet 'urvilleana' recognises the 19th century French explorer and botanist Jules Dumont d'Urville, who was the first to document many plants during expeditions in South America.

To the south of the car park is a collection of hybrid forms of *Helleborus orientalis* often known as winter rose or Lenten rose, growing in their preferred habitat of dappled shade. Originating in Central and Western Europe, they are members of the Ranunculaceae, ranunculus family which includes anemone, buttercup, clematis, and delphinium. There are around 17 species, but modern breeding has produced a wide range of colours from white to dark plum almost to black, and an array of flower types, single, double, frilled etc. The flowers have five petal-like sepals surrounding a ring of small cup-like nectaries which are petals modified to hold nectar. The sepals do not fall as petals would and can remain on the plant, sometimes for many months. On the other side of the road is a **coastal redwood, *Sequoia sempervirens***, originating on the Pacific coast of the US. This tree was planted by the Governor, Sir Keith Seaman on 31st October 1977 shortly before the official opening of the gardens, (see reference above), to mark the Silver Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

At the end, walk a short distance down the road to the meadow garden and, hidden behind an immaculate hedge of Japanese box, is an artistic palette of brilliant colours created by blending red, yellow, orange and white *Zinnia* and interspersing them with *Geum*. Zinnias are an American native flower, originating from the grassland areas of North America but there are several species that are native to regions of South America.

HK, TA, LE, HM, NF 03-22

This leaflet has been prepared by the Garden Guides and funded by the Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide Inc.

For information about the Friends and/or guided walks, please telephone 8222 9367
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