

## DECEMBER 2021 / JANUARY 2022 walk from the Lower Car Park

To help keep visitors keep COVID-19 safe we have decided that, rather than supply a paper copy of the walk, there is a downloadable version on our website (<https://www.friendsbgadelaide.com/guided-walks>) or a copy in the Noticeboard at the Garden that may be photographed to take with you.

To begin this walk, make your way from the carpark, past the Chris Steele-Scott Pavilion and on to Fern gully. On the left side of the road up to the fern collection is **Rhodosphaera rhodanthema**, or deep yellow wood, native to northern NSW coastal areas, with a rounded form, 8-12 m tall and racemes of red flowers in spring. It makes an excellent street tree as the trunk is often 2 m tall before branching. Adjacent to this is another east coast native the blueberry ash, **Elaeocarpus reticulatus**. This specimen has its signature blue berries (drupes), developing from racemes of pink or white flowers. The leaves are simple and glabrous and will often redden before falling.



Take the steep path up Fern Gully and in the outside angle of the second corner is a specimen of **Diselma archeri**. This tiny conifer is an important component of the Tasmanian dwarf mountain forest. Scientifically named in the 1840's by J.D.Hooker, during the Ross Expedition to Antarctica, it commemorates William Archer, the owner of a property called Cheshunt near Deloraine ---and is commonly called the Cheshunt pine. However, misspelling often turns this into chestnut pine!



Nearby is a specimen of **Callicoma serratifolia** which has distinctive lance-shaped serrated leaves which are smooth and shiny above and paler below with whitish or rust-coloured hairs, and prominent raised veins. The young foliage has pale bronze colouring. The flowers (October and November) bear a superficial resemblance to the genus **Acacia** as they are pale yellow, globular and fluffy. However, the fruits are quite different, being small capsules produced in clusters. *Callicoma* is of historic interest, being the first timber used for the wattle and daub huts constructed by early settlers in Sydney Cove. In those times the tree was known as black wattle.

Further on and on your right is an **Olearia argophylla**, the musk daisy bush. This is often found in fern gullies and moist areas of sclerophyll forests in NSW, Victoria. and Tasmania. It is the tallest *Olearia* (up to 10 m) of the 180 or so species, 130 of which are endemic to Australia. The leaf undersides are covered with fine white hairs and appear silver, adding to the beauty of the plant, especially when a light breeze ruffles the leaves. The numerous, white daisy type flowers are grouped in terminal heads and have a slight spicy scent---hence the common name. The timber of large specimens was used for cabinet making and sculpture.

Further on, look for the knobbly bark on the old man **Banksia serrata** arching across the path. These trees can be a wonderful variety of shapes depending on habitat, from tall and stately to gnarly, bent over or even shrubby. The rounded seed follicles on the cones reflect the knobbly form of the bark which, although usually grey, can be blackened by fire and will exude red sap when injured. It is native to the east coast of Australia, up to 16 m tall, and is frequently grown in parks and gardens. The yellow, fading to grey, flowers occur in the summer followed by large cones when flowers have been pollinated. Pollinators include birds, beetles and bees as well as tiny antechinus, sugar gliders and flying foxes. The genus is named for Sir Joseph Banks who first collected this species in Botany Bay in 1770.



Another species of *Olearia* in the collections here at Mount Lofty includes *Olearia lirata*, the dusty daisy bush, which is also in flower. The hairs under the leaves are rather more yellow than on the musk daisy bush and it will only grow to about 4 m. Look above the path and you will see groves of plantings of the Wollemi pine, **Wollemia nobilis** which was only known in fossil records until it was discovered in temperate forest wilderness in NSW in 1994. Since that time there have been many specimens propagated for sale. the Gardens have been fortunate to receive many well grown specimens that have outgrown their owners and the relatively close plantings are now resembling the original groves found in NSW.

Further on there is a striking shrub from the wetter parts of south-east Australia known as the blanket shrub or tree, *Bedfordia arborescens*. The common name reflects the white felty underside of its leaves. The contrast between the smooth shiny upper surface and the 'underblanket' is striking, so please feel them. It has large woolly bunches of yellow flowers from early summer. Their shading role is like the rhododendrons of the Himalayas and China though the species bear no relationship. The shrub is endangered because its habitat is shrinking and it only regenerates from fire by wind-scattered seed. It is found in damp gullies, on the edges of temperate rainforest and in cloud forest on Cape Barren Island.

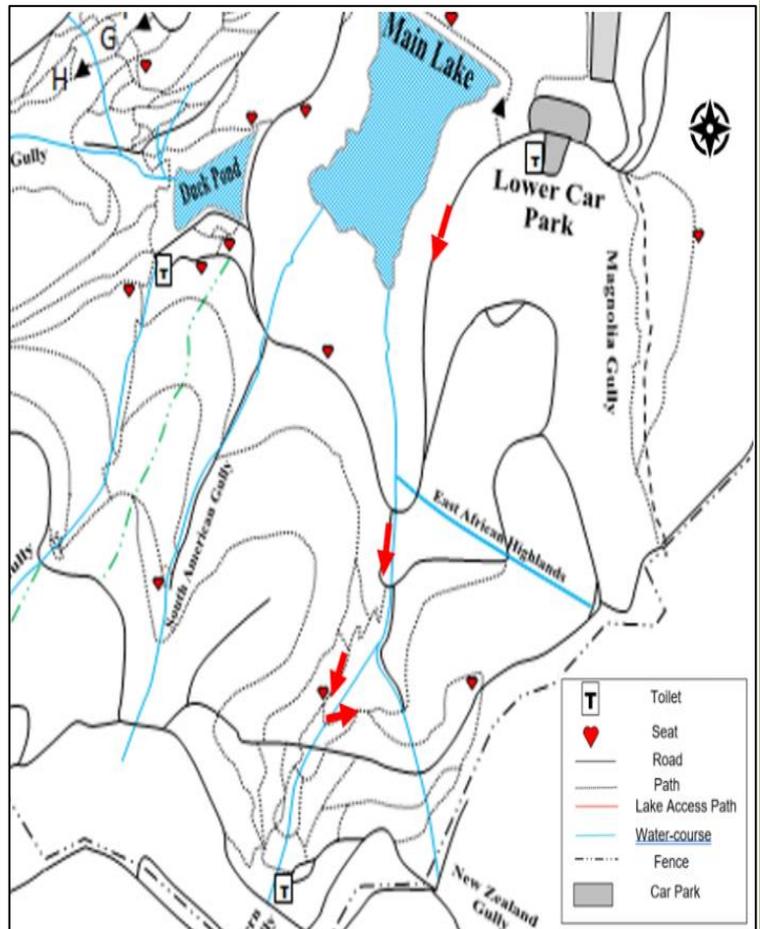
Take the path down to your left and the large ferns on either side of the path are handsome specimens of *Osmunda regalis* or royal fern. It is native to Europe and found in Africa and Asia and favors wet sites in bogs and near running water. It is sometimes referred to as the flowering fern because of the appearance of the fertile fronds, or sporangia, as shown in the image at right. In Slavic mythology, these sporangia are known as *Perun's flowers* which are collected and associated with magical powers. The young shoots of the fern, termed *fiddleheads*, are also harvested and eaten as the tips have an asparagus like taste.



A group of three *Cyathea tomentosissima*, or dwarf woolly tree fern are to be found over the bridge at the junction of a small path to the right. It is native to New Guinea, being found in cool mountain cloud forests and high elevation grasslands. It is one of the smaller tree ferns, growing to about 2.5 metres. Note the new fronds emerging from the trunk and their covering of dense pale brown hairs. Whilst many tree ferns are hairy, this species is particularly so, and recognised in the species name "tomentosissima" meaning very hairy.

As the final stop a drift of *Cissus antarctica*, the kangaroo vine may be found near the junction with a path from above. It is part of the grapevine family, Vitaceae and has many anatomical similarities in form to wine and table grapes. Cissus is derived from the Greek term for "ivy" and "antarctica" meaning opposite to the Arctic as it is native to NSW and Queensland.

Nearby is a tall conifer, the kauri or *Agathis australis* is from New Zealand and can grow to 50 metres. These ancient trees hail from Jurassic times. Agathis is Greek for a ball of string which describes the cones that you can see high up if you look carefully, and australis for southern and not, confusingly, for Australia. The timber, used for houses and ships, was highly valued as the tree sheds lower branches and is therefore free of knots. The lack of these branches means that vines can't climb the tree, quite an asset in rainforest. The dark sickle shaped leaves are covered in wax; this wax and resin from all parts of the tree are used for making linoleum and varnish. The flaking bark, which helps prevent parasites, can form piles two metres high at the trees' base. Along with leaves this litter is valuable feed for roots. Widespread clearance throughout their habitats saw 90% of the trees removed or destroyed before 1900 so there are very few of the ancient giants left anywhere. We recommend that you make your way down through New Zealand Gully and enjoy the diversity of species from our near neighbour. At the Lake walk consider turning left to enjoy the vistas at the Duck Pond or make your way back to the Car Park directly.



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