



This month's walk begins on the Goodman Plaza, featuring many plants from the north of SA, and ends in the Garden of Health near the Ginkgo gates at the western entrance to the Gardens. The gates, with their motif of ginkgo leaves, were designed by Hossein and Angela Valamanesh.

See over page for map

*An Australian native

- *1 *Eucalyptus bicostata*** (syn. *E. globulus* subsp. *bicostata*) Southern bluegum NSW, Vic, SA
 Southern bluegum is represented in SA by a small population near Mt Bryan in the mid-north, a stand which is thought to be a relic of a once much wider distribution. This tall, young specimen with mostly juvenile foliage is highlighted here because the first adult leaves are just beginning to appear at the top of the canopy. In contrast, the *Eucalyptus gilli* in beds to the west retains its juvenile foliage throughout its life.
- *2 *Santalum acuminatum*** (Nullarbor form) Quandong, native peach All mainland states
 The familiar bright-red fruits of native peach are still to come, but the bees and other insects have quickly discovered the first tiny flowers of what promises to be a spectacular flowering. The pale-green buds open to reveal a shallow, nectar-rich disc set amongst the anthers and fleshy, deep-red perianth parts.
- 3 Wetland rock installation**
 This assemblage of some 30 very large rocks, much-loved by agile teenagers, is meant to represent the fractured-rock aquifer in the strata deep below. Water harvested upstream from the adjacent First Creek, flows through the wetlands and, after a final mechanical filtration, is pumped down, filling the gaps between the rocks and forming a plume of fresh water which will eventually be used to irrigate the gardens.
- 4 Dahlia garden** Dahlias originated in single petal form in the uplands of Mexico and nearby regions. Known as Bailey's Triangle, this little garden is named for J.F. Bailey, our 4th Director, and former president of the Dahlia Society of SA. The 200 dahlia cultivars planted in November as tubers are just a sample of the thousands of cultivars now available in a wide range of size, shapes and colours. The display is planted around a central Illawarra flame tree (a 1948 memorial to Bailey) and enclosed by a nearly century-old holm oak hedge (*Quercus ilex*) with its holly-like leaves. The dahlia tuber, valued by the Aztecs as a food, tasting like mild radish, was once sent to Europe to compete with the potato – a clearly unsuccessful initiative.
- 5 *Amorphallus titanum*** Corpse flower, titan arum Western Sumatra
 On either side of the southern door of the Amazon waterlily Pavilion you can see a collection of leaves of the fantastic titan arum. What looks like a small tree is in fact a single leaf stalk with a branching 'canopy' of leaflets. In its vegetative phase, the plant is gathering energy in its underground corm in preparation for flowering, an event which may need several leaf cycles. Keep your antennae up for any news of flowering.
- 6 *Phoenix roebelenii*** Dwarf date palm SW China to northern Vietnam and Laos
 Its thin-fleshed fruit (a drupe) is edible, but *P. roebelenii* is mainly grown as an ornamental for its modest size (2 to 7 m) and elegant leaves. It also has a striking pattern of woody triangular leaf bases, the younger ones with a highly-polished lower surface. Although native to SE Asia, it will grow where minimum temperatures do not fall below -3°C. The specific epithet honours the orchid collector Carl Roebelen.
- 7 *Ginkgo biloba*** Maidenhair tree China
 Ginkgos are dioecious (Gk: 'two houses') with male and female trees. Pollen from small cones on male trees is dispersed by wind, but the sperm which fertilise the females must swim the last bit of the journey to the egg. Ginkgos are the highest form of plant life to retain motile sperm. The resulting pale-green seeds on the female trees in this small stand look like fruits, but are just seeds with a partly fleshy seed coat. The seeds are used in Asian cuisine and the leaves are used medicinally, though scientific support for efficacy is lacking. They are worth another visit later in autumn when the leaves turn a deep saffron yellow.
- 8 *Platanus orientalis*** Oriental plane South-eastern Europe, Western Asia
 Oriental plane is a large, deciduous tree with a widely-spreading crown, grey-brown bark which sheds in small patches, and maple-like leaves which turn yellow-orange in autumn. The male flowerheads are dense globular clusters of tiny, yellowish flowers. The red-tipped female clusters develop into persistent, dangling, spiky clusters of fruit. It is said to be one of the parents of the London plane, *Platanus x acerifolius*.
- *9 *Xanthorrhoea quadrangulata*** Grass tree Yorke Pen., Mt Lofty and Flinders Ranges, SA
 The young green flower spikes of this slow-growing endemic species make a lovely display now, but will soon be densely-covered in small white flowers attended by bees and other insects. It grows mainly on dry rocky sites, but also on heavy clay soils. The trunk, sometimes branched, can reach 2m tall, with a skirt of old 4-sided leaves which provide habitat for wrens and small mammals. Cultural uses include hunting implements, resin used as adhesive, nectar from flowering spikes and food from the base of the leaves.
- 10 *Camptotheca acuminata*** Tree of joy, cancer tree China and Tibet
 Normally a deciduous tree to 20m, this multi-stemmed coppice regrowth at the end of a row of tall Italian cypress has mildly-fragrant, globular clusters of flowers and fruits, a bit like those of the plane tree. The rather incongruous common names reflect its long use in Chinese medicine to treat cancer. Camptothecin, an alkaloid from *C. acuminata*, has been successfully used to treat many human cancers in modern trials, but chemists have since produced analogues with improved physical properties and clinical performance.