

FEBRUARY 2022 WALK FROM THE LOWER CAR PARK

The map on the reverse is an enlarged section of the general map of the garden inside the brochure and shows the location of this month's plants



Before setting out on this walk, wander around the paved area where *Viburnum lantana* known is heavy with black, red, orange and yellow berries. The rough, leathery leaves have a downy underside, and new shoots are unusually furry for a viburnum. As you move towards the road, look for *Rudbeckia* with their distinctive cone flowers, *Lilium* in flower, and under the noticeboard the dark green shrub, *Chilean guava*, *Ugni molinae*, with tiny deep plum-coloured fruit. It is said that Queen Victoria especially liked marmalade made from these.

Along the road to the left of the dam, "the meadow" on the right will soon be ablaze with sunflowers. Further on the left, before the road turns, is East African Gully where two large leafed plants can be seen. *Ensete ventricosum*, Ethiopian or Abyssinian banana, is a herbaceous species of flowering plant in the banana family, Musaceae. This is Ethiopia's most important root crop. Although the fruits are inedible the rhizome is a staple. After flowering, the plant dies. Next to this is the perennial *Lobelia gibbosa*, a native of the wetter upland areas of Africa. The flowers appear on tall spike which may be up to 9 metres tall. The species name reflects the fact that the gibbons use the leaves to build their nests.

Just before the small pond, *Acmena smithii* var. *minor*, lillypilly, has tiny fluffy cream flowers with prominent stamens which will develop into mauve fruits in late summer. It is a native of eastern Australia.

Just before the entrance to of South American gully, the colourful display of *Verbena rigida* is particularly eye-catching. Originally from Brazil and Argentina, this beautiful plant has become a weed in parts of NSW but seems to behave itself in our state. Apparently, it is resistant to rabbits and so may prove useful where those pests are prolific. *Salvia uliginosa*, the bog sage, has large leaves and lovely blue flowers. It comes from boggy, marshy areas of southern Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina and the species name reflects this habitat. Slightly further along, on the other side of the entrance to South American Gully, are the colourful long tubular flowers of *Fuchsia boliviana*. Fuchsias are named to honour Leonhart Fuchs (1501-1566), a German doctor and botanist who wrote a herbal with fine woodcut illustrations and who founded one of the earliest German Botanical Gardens in Tübingen. *F. boliviana* comes from the Andes and can handle the slight frosts here at Mount Lofty BG, growing to about 2m tall.

Further on, the splendid view across the duckpond may stop you in your tracks. Particularly arresting are the three golden-yellow, pyramidal specimens of *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* 'Gold Rush' seen on the opposite bank. This cultivar was developed in Japan in 1974 by irradiating seed from the wild species, the dawn redwood, itself only discovered in 1945 in a remote part of China.

Take the path to the left of the Duckpond, and, before crossing the bridge, there are several *Hydrangea normalis*, known as lacecap hydrangeas. Lacecap blossoms have tiny buds in the centre which are fertile, and larger showy sterile blossoms around the outer edge. As with all hydrangeas they may be pink or blue depending on the acidity of the soil. Crossing the bridge, on the left *Astilbe chinensis* 'White Cloud' has sprays of tiny white flowers. Along the path, behind the seat are blue lacecap hydrangea.

Before crossing the Bog Garden, a stand of *Persicaria decipiens*, known as slender knotweed, is native to Australia and Asia, though it now has wider distribution. It prefers a wet situation, and the tiny red flowers glow when hit by the sun. *Persicaria decipiens* was among the plants collected by Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander in Botany Bay in 1770. Crossing carefully across the boulders, take the time to look down to the Duckpond and up to the Bog Garden plantings. On the railing the contorted trunks of *Salix caprea* 'Pendula' show the age of this plant, and just below the railing on the left of the creek *Hypericum*, or St John's wort, would have been covered in bright yellow flowers through spring, resulting in the heavy crop of berries now on display. Hypericum has been used medicinally to treat depression.

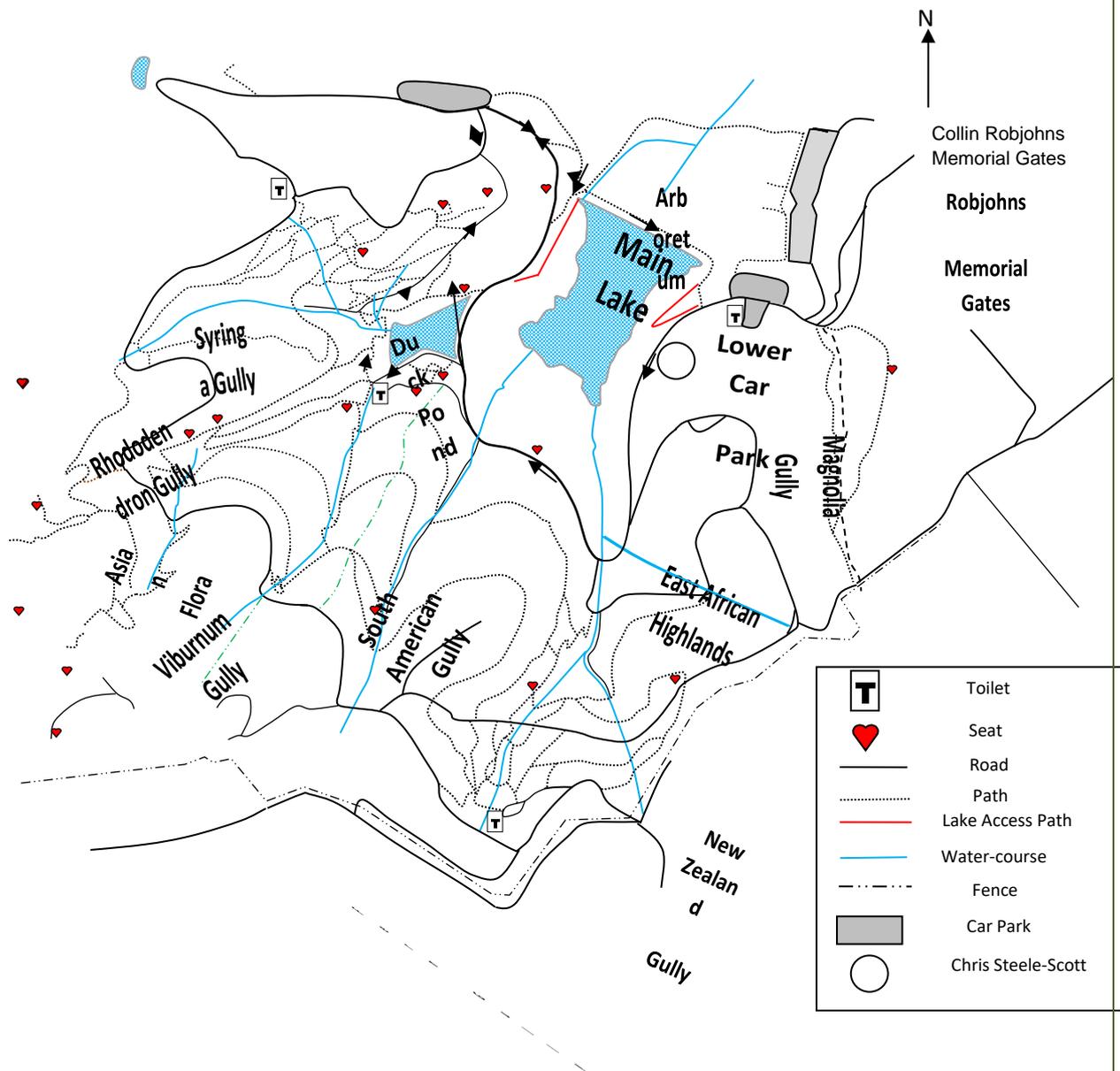
To the right of the steps at the top of the path is a grafted selection of Japanese maple *Acer japonica*, which has very contorted branching from the tall graft. You may choose to go left to see the wonderful collection of hydrangeas in flower at this time of the year or turn right to walk below the Rock Garden which was a feature of the garden at its opening to the public in 1977. Many ornamental maple cultivars have been planted in this area.

Continue on below the Gazebo and back to the road where, in the dappled shade of a large white oak, *Quercus alba*, is a bed of colourful shrubs and perennials. The magenta pink cone-flowers, *Echinacea* sp. are eye-catching and attractive to bees and, if you look behind this planting, you may see *Buddleia davidii* 'Black Knight' still flowering. Buddleias are well-known for attracting butterflies. The pink hydrangeas will hold their pink outer sterile blossoms throughout the summer. A low hedge of *Daphne x transatlantica* 'Eternal Fragrance' bears perfumed small flowers for most of the year. Orange day lilies, *Hemerocallis* sp. open their trumpet-shaped blooms on a daily

basis in summer and, as you round the corner, small fuchsias bear pendent red and purple flowers which are a favourite source of nectar for a small honeyeater, the eastern spinebill. Behind the fuchsias you might notice a recent planting of large-leaved **mist flower**, *Bartlettina sordida*, with lilac flowers. A border of dianthus has finished flowering. At this point you might notice that the roadside gutter is flowing strongly and wonder about the source of the water. This comes from a natural spring higher up the slope which flows year-round into the main lake and supplements the Garden's water supply.

Downhill, on the opposite side of the road a little further along is a group of **golden ash**, *Fraxinus excelsior* 'Jaspidea', which are already showing early signs of autumn colour. The pinnate leaves turn a butter-yellow and the bark is also an attractive golden-yellow. Golden twigs tipped by deep black buds are an attractive feature in winter. Golden ash is a form of European or common ash which occurs in most of Europe.

DS, JH, HM 01-22



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
www.friendsbgadelaide.com