

WINTER 2023

MOUNT LOFTY BOTANIC GARDEN WALK FROM THE UPPER CAR PARK



To help keep visitors COVID-19 safe we provide a copy on the Noticeboard at the Garden to be photographed to take with you or there is a downloadable version on our website

www.friendsbgadelaide.com

This winter walk has been designed so that visitors can choose to wander through several parts of the upper Garden dependent on the weather. Leave the carpark down the road where, on the left is a hedge of *Daphne x transatlantica* 'Eternal Fragrance', a modern cultivar with small white flowers throughout the winter. Further along the bitumen a collection of holly, of which there are more than 400 species, displays many varieties including the common holly, *Ilex aquifolium*, with bright red berries, *I. aquifolium* 'Aureo Marginata' a variegated form with bright yellow margins on the leaves, and *I. aquifolium* 'Bacciflava' with long lasting yellow berries. The collection also includes several species from America and Asia.

The bed on the left contains many azaleas (rhododendrons) which are progressively coming into flower. Take the road to the right of the Summer House and enter the recess bordered by black mondo grass, *Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens' and a tall shrub *Plectranthus* 'Plepalila' (Mona Lavender), which offers deep colour for low light areas. After exploring the varied plants in this "room" there is a picnic table under the spruce tree for a quick stop.

Return to the road and take the next entry onto the lawns where South Australian and internationally recognised sculptor, Greg Johns' Guardian Figure, is well displayed. We are fortunate to have several of his works throughout the Garden. Beyond this sculpture is a magnificent English oak, *Quercus suber* planted with forethought so that in the space around it branches have stretched out over time.

To the right of the oak you might explore the dwarf conifer collection, a gift to the Garden by nurseryman, the late David Thompson. The collection has grown in the 35 years since it was planted and many of its trees are labelled. It's a marvel of contrasting forms, colours and sizes.

Up the hill there is a large bed of several selections of *Calluna vulgaris* coming into purple winter bloom. The genus is in the heath family (Ericaceae) which has over 700 species, from ground covers like this to tall trees. The common name of heath or heather is applied to several different plants, this being one of them.

Closer to the road, a large Mexican cypress, *Cupressus lusitanica* sweeps gracefully to the ground.

Turn left along the road and cross to the other side, where shade-loving plants have been grouped for their form texture and colour. Hydrangeas along here (both mophead and oak leaf forms) have taken on autumn tones which will last until they are pruned in August. A *Luculia pinceana* with pink fragrant flowers is a welcome sight and scent in winter. This plant is at home in a woodland setting and originates in the lower Himalayas. The deep purple-foliaged shrub is *Loropetalum chinensis*, an evergreen which will have deep pink tasselled flowers in spring.

A little deeper in the bed, *Pinus balfouriana*, the foxtail pine, is a rare high-elevation pine that is endemic to California. It is closely related to the Great Basin and Rocky Mountain bristlecone pines. It is thought that *P. balfouriana* can live up to 3000 years in the Sierra Nevada, although the highest currently proven age is 2110 years. The glossy needles are held in bunches (fascicles) of five.

Closer to the rotunda you'll find tree ferns and a Wollemi pine, *Wollemia nobilis*. The oakleaf hydrangea seen here in its autumn glory was first sent to the United Kingdom by Quaker John Bartram (1699 –1777) who was a farmer near Philadelphia and was fascinated by botany. While

we hear of the many “plant hunters” who travelled the world collecting for their wealthy patrons, Bartram never left the United States but is nevertheless recognised for the many unique seeds and fresh plants he sent to the United Kingdom.

In autumn azaleas here often throw blooms - a preview to the main show of flowers in abundance in spring.

LE, HM, NF, DS 05/23

John Bartram, by Howard Pyle



The Garden Guides of the Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide Inc. have prepared this leaflet.

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