

MT LOFTY BOTANIC GARDEN

NOVEMBER 2022 WALK FROM THE LOWER CAR PARK



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

This walk explores the rose collection at the Mount Lofty Botanic Gardens. Fossil evidence indicates that the rose is 35 million years old. Roses belong to the family **Rosaceae** which includes about 2,380 species in 95 genera. All the plants noted in this walk belong to this family. The largest genus by far is **Prunus** which includes plums, cherries, peaches, apricots and almonds. One of the most widely cultivated fruit trees, the **apple, Malus domestica**, is also the most widely known of the genus *Malus* used by humans.

Make your way down the stairs just past the car park and across the dam wall, passing on the left prostrate **Cotoneaster horizontalis** which is covered in tiny white flowers. Examining them you will see that they are a simple five-petal flower, a common feature to this family. The bright red berries in autumn hold throughout winter making them a very worthwhile addition to any garden. Native to the temperate regions of Asia, Europe and North Africa, and in the mountains of south-western China and the Himalayas, they are related to hawthorn, **Crataegus**, firethorns, **Pyracantha**, **Photinia** and rowans, **Sorbus**, all members of Rosaceae.

At the end of the dam, take the stairs uphill following the sign to the Rose Garden, and keep to the lower path where you will be walking through an interesting collection of *Malus* and *Pyrus* species. You will see many small fruit which will ripen over the summer. The common apple, **Malus domestica**, is now thought to be a complex and ancient hybrid, originating in central Asia and cultivated since the Neolithic age. Cider was certainly made by the Romans. Pears derived from **Pyrus communis** are grown primarily for their fruit, however **Pyrus salicifolia 'Pendula'**, which can be found in this collection, is grown for its plentiful blossom and tiny fruit as well as its weeping habit. Pearwood, called fruitwood in the furniture trade, is very stable. It is used for turning, for mathematical and musical instruments, and for bread boards.

Cross the bitumen road and continue under the Pinoaks, crossing a small wooden bridge. On the left is a collection of flowering **Prunus** donated by Okayama Prefecture, Japan, in November 1988. This include collection includes **Prunus yedoensis**, **Yoshimo cherry**. The Yoshimo cherry was introduced to Europe and North America in 1902, and are the cherries planted in Washington DC where they are famous for their spring display.

At the top of the rise lies the Species Rose Collection, established here in the 1980s. In 2010 it was refurbished after a generous donation in memory of Mr Clive Armour, the Managing Director of ATCO Power from 1998 to 2008. Clive was Chair of the Board of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide and State Herbarium from 1994 to 2000. It is now called the ATCO Species Rose Garden and offers much to attract us. Species roses are wild roses from which the modern roses have been bred.

The oldest representation of a rose was found in a fresco in the palace of Minos, Crete, and dates to about 1450BC. The world's oldest living rose is believed to be over 1,000 years old. The dog rose, **Rosa canina**, grows on the wall of the Cathedral of Hildesheim in Germany, and its presence is documented since 815AD. The rosebush symbolizes the prosperity of the city of Hildesheim, and it is believed that as long as it flourishes the city will not decline. In 1945 allied bombers destroyed the cathedral, yet the rose's roots remained intact beneath the rubble and it was soon growing again.

Walking up the road on the right-hand side you will see **Winghorn Omei Rose, Rosa sericea f. pteracantha** from Western China. It has delicate fern-like foliage and winged thorns. Unusually for a rose it has only four petals. Nearby **Rosa multiflora 'Watsoniana'**, a cultivar with finely cut variegated leaves.

Still further up the road, **Himalayan musk rose, Rosa brunonii**, promises a spectacular display as the season progresses. In the autumn it will bear many small hips.

The bed on the left contains several bushes of **Father Hugo's rose, Rosa hugonis**. Not only spectacular in the spring because it flowers so profusely, but in the autumn, it will have a heavy crop of dark mulberry-red, globular hips. The rose was named for Father Hugo, Hugh Scallan, who was a Catholic missionary in China, and introduced it to England from China in the late 1880s.



Continue up the hill and admire the large cream flowers of **Rosa gigantea**, native to the Himalayas, where it grows at 1,000 to 1,500 metres altitude, and southwest China. It is the largest species of rose, often climbing 20 metres or more into the crowns of other trees. The beautiful creamy

white flowers can grow to 14cm diameter. The hips are yellow or orange, and often last through the winter into the spring, being still present when the new flowers appear.

There are as many different versions of the development of the modern hybrid tea roses as there are rosarians, but the story started with crosses between the giant Himalayan rose, *Rosa gigantea*, and the **China rose, Rosa chinensis** (whether naturally or not is unclear). The most famous of these are Parson's Pink, Park's Yellow, Slater's Crimson and Hume's Blush, known as the China stud roses. Crosses between Slater's Crimson and Hume's Blush produced the early Tea roses, supposedly because their perfume smelled of Chinese black tea.

Burnet Rose, Rosa pimpinellifolia may be found on the hillside behind this bed. It is a species of rose native to western, central and southern Europe (north to Iceland and Norway) and northwest Africa. It is generally restricted to sand dunes or limestone pavements and typically has a coastal distribution when not on limestone.

Many roses of historical interest, known as The Old European Roses, are also found in the collection – Gallicas, Damasks, Albas, Centifolias and Moss roses. This garden has much to offer throughout the growing season as many varieties – Rugosas, Portlands and Hybrid Musks – are repeat flowering. Then in the autumn the varied display of hips are fascinating.

Did you know that roses do not actually have thorns? They have prickles which are outgrowths of the bark, while thorns grow from the wood of the stem. Nevertheless, in our species rose collection there are many varieties of prickles which make for yet another feature of interest.

On the eastern side of the bed as you descend downhill can be found *Rosa banksiae* var. *banksiae* with tiny hips. These are among the first to flower and are vigorous climbers which can often be found clambering over large trees. They thrive with very little attention. Their long growths are covered with clusters of small flowers, always white or yellow. It originated in sub-tropical China where it is used as a boundary hedge between fields, and was first introduced to the west in 1807 by William Kent, who worked for the director of Kew, Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820). The first specimens were white, and named after Banks' wife, Dorothea. The yellow form var. *lutea* was not introduced to the west until 1824, by John Parks from Nankin.

The largest rose bush in the world is a specimen of *Rosa banksiae* var. *banksiae* in Tombstone, Arizona, which was planted in 1886. The circumference of its trunk is now about 3.5 metres and its canopy (supported by wires and scaffolding) covers an area of 800 sq.m.

On the hill behind the rose beds are planted yet other members of Rosaceae – many crab apples, particularly *Malus* 'Gorgeous', which will bear many bright red fruit in the autumn (the parrots permitting) and *Malus hupehensis* 'Strawberry Parfait', both of which have white blossom in the spring. *Malus hupehensis* was found in western China in 1900 by the great English plant hunter, Ernest Wilson, and brought to gardeners by his employer, the Veitch nursery (although it was not formally named until 1915). Wilson believed that it was the finest flowering tree that he ever introduced.

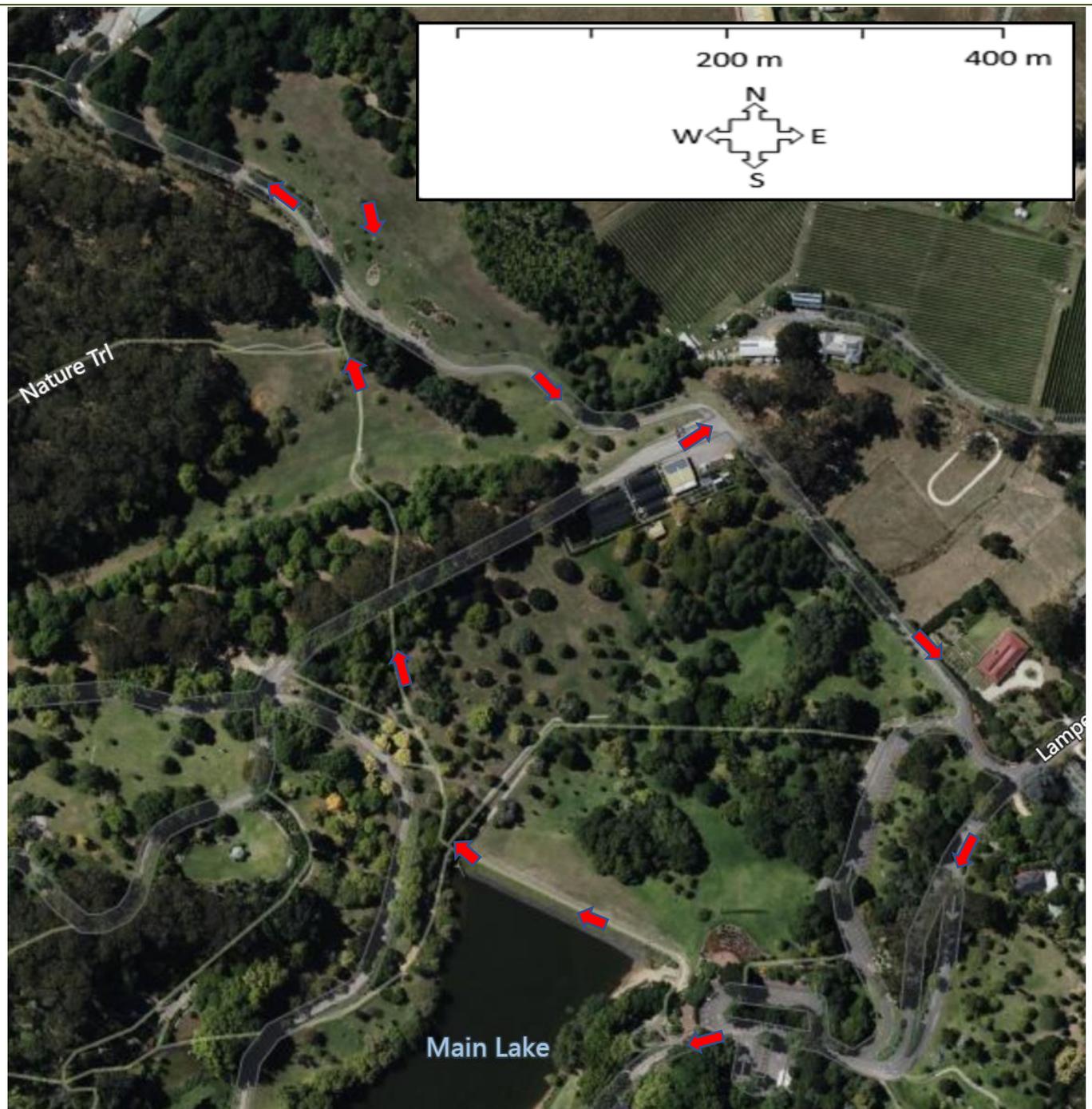
Common medlar, *Mespilus germanica*, despite its name, is indigenous to southwest Asia and also southeastern Europe, mostly the Black Sea coasts of modern Turkey. It may have been cultivated for as long as 3000 years. The Loquat, *Eriobotrya japonica*, is also related, and sometimes called the "Japanese medlar". The fruit, while very attractive, are very hard and acidic. They become edible after being softened, 'bletted', by frost, or naturally in storage given sufficient time. Once softening begins the skin rapidly takes a wrinkled texture and turns dark brown, and the inside reduces to the consistency and flavour reminiscent of apple sauce. It is a favourite for jam and jelly making.



A very unusual Rosaceae, **Osoberry or Indian plum, Oemleria cerasiformis**, already has a heavy crop of small fruit. When growing in its native North America, it forms heavy bunches of small red fruit, but here in Mt Lofty we can see many undeveloped berries in a cluster at the top of those that have developed.

Continue walking downhill along the bitumen road, passing the Nursery, and then walking past the wet arboretum on your right. At the top of the hill, just before going through the gates, on the left are several bush forms of **Cotoneaster**. Turn right and walk through the Collin Robjohns Memorial Gates and back into the garden. Collin Robjohns was instrumental in forming the Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide in 1977 at the time of the opening of the Mt Lofty Botanic Garden. The gates were made by South Australian sculptor, Greg Johns, whose work is displayed in the garden.

Make your way back to the Car Park, passing another spectacular bank of Cotoneaster in full flower, and at the entrance to Magnolia Gully, another bank covered in *Cotoneaster conspicuus*, the name borne out by the display.



This leaflet has been prepared by the Garden Guides 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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