

## September 2023 WALK FROM THE LOWER CAR PARK



To help keep visitors COVID-19 safe we provide a copy of this walk on the Noticeboard at the Gardens which may be photographed or there is a downloadable version on our website (<https://www.friendsbgadelaide.com/guided-walks>)

Magnolia Gully is spectacular at this time of the year. The display this season is slightly later than usual and should last well into September. Magnolias are one of the most primitive flowering plants in evolutionary history and fossil members of the family Magnoliaceae have been found in Europe and even in Greenland, which indicates that the family may once have spread from south-east Asia to the Americas before the two continents drifted apart. Today they are indigenous only in Southern China and the Southern United States. Magnolias may be evergreen or deciduous, with the majority being the latter. Magnolias which flower before the leaves have emerged are all Chinese, while there are many Chinese and American species which flower after leaves have expanded.

To begin this walk, make your way back along the driveway which brought you in to the Car Park. On the left of the road a specimen of the **Yulan magnolia, *Magnolia denudata*** has large cream flowers. These flowers were regarded as a symbol of purity in the Tang Dynasty in their native China. It has been cultivated in Chinese Buddhist temple gardens since 600AD and was planted in the grounds of the Emperor's Palace. It is the official city flower of Shanghai. Across the exit road a line of **star magnolia, *Magnolia stellata*** have been flowering for the last month and usually continue well into the season. The furry buds open to the star-shaped flowers which have at least 12 thin, delicate petal-like "tepals", with some cultivars having more than 30.

Unlike most plant families, whose flower parts are arranged in whorls, the Magnoliaceae has their stamens and pistils in spirals on an elongate conical receptacle. This arrangement is also found in some plant fossils and is believed to be a primitive condition for flowering plants. Another primitive aspect is that their sepals and petals look alike, for which the term 'tepals' was coined. As Magnolias existed before bees evolved, the flowers are shaped to enable pollination by beetles. Accordingly, *Magnolia* and *Michelia* flowers are extremely robust, thus avoiding damage by heavy insects,

Cross the road and take the path on the left. Growing in the boggy stream on the right the red-stemmed dogwood, *Cornus pumila*, glows in spring sun. On the left-hand side of the path, ***Michelia doltsopa* 'Silver Clouds'** is another genus of the Magnoliaceae, which has 45 species of mainly evergreen, tropical trees with scented flowers, and some with scented wood. The leaves are magnolia-like, shiny above and sometimes hairy beneath. The flowers are showy and appear from the base of the leaf (whereas magnolia flowers are at the end of the stem). They were named after Florentine botanist Pietro Antonio Micheli (1679-1737). ***Michelia figo***, or port wine magnolia, is also a member of this genus. It should be noted that many botanists now think michaelias are just another form of magnolia.

Up the hill on the bend ***Magnolia kobus* var. *leobneri***, native to Japan, which is closely related to the star magnolia. This hybrid was first obtained by Max Loebner of Pillnitz, Germany. Paul M. Kache designated the new hybrid in 1920, to honour him.

On the left a group of ***Manglietia yuyuanensis*** from China, another member of Magnoliaceae, although its long, tapered leaves are unlike others of the family. On the opposite side of the path, ***Magnolia liliiflora*** is showing deep magenta buds opening to lily-like flowers. It has many common names including mulan magnolia, purple magnolia, red magnolia, lily magnolia, tulip magnolia, jane magnolia and woody-orchid. A small tree, native to southwest China (in Sichuan and Yunnan) but cultivated for centuries elsewhere in China and also Japan, it is sometimes called the Japanese magnolia. .

On the left again, a **Chinese evergreen magnolia**, *Magnolia delavayi*, commemorates Père Jean Marie Delavay, a French Catholic missionary, explorer and botanist who was sent to China in 1867. He ultimately sent more than 200,000 herbarium specimens back to France. *Magnolia delavayi* is generally grown for its tough, evergreen leaves and brown bark, though it does produce delicate cup-shaped, perfumed flowers. There are many hard, conical fruit on the ground under the tree.

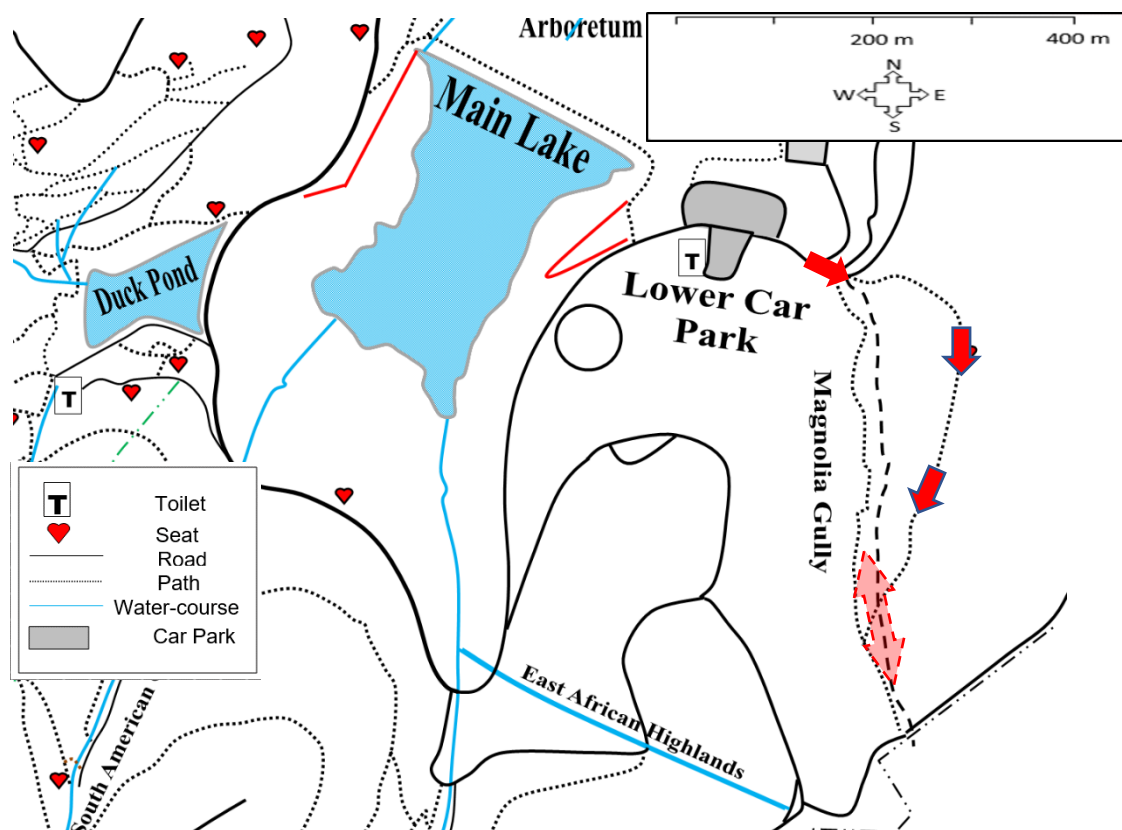
Nearby the **Chinese coffin tree or Chinese fir**, *Cunninghamia lanceolata* has interesting cones. There are other timber trees throughout China and Taiwan named “coffin tree” demonstrating the value of the scientific binomial system. The woods of these trees usually are light and strong with a pleasant aroma.

Further on the left-hand side is a beaver tree, *Magnolia virginiana*, also known as sweet bay magnolia in its native United States. It was the first magnolia to be scientifically described under modern rules of botanical nomenclature, and is the type species of the genus *Magnolia*. It may be evergreen or deciduous depending on the climate, but here is evergreen. The next specimen is the **Huangshan magnolia**, *Magnolia cylindrica* which has flowers with pink on the outside and white inside. It is endemic to China but is now threatened due to habitat loss.

Walk under the tunnel of Cox juniper, *Juniperus recurva* var. *coxii* which is native to northern Myanmar (Burma) through to China, growing at 3,000-4,000 m altitude. Then on the left is *Thuja plicata* ‘*Zebrina*’ with attractive green and gold foliage, the shoots flat, with side shoots only in a single plane. The bark is stringy textured and reddish-brown. Near the top of Magnolia Gully, on the right are two *Taiwania cryptomerioides*. Now extinct in the wild, this is another specimen known as a “coffin tree”.

At the top of the path there are two choices. Either take the path back down for a short walk and further views of Magnolia Gully or continue to the top of the rise and take the road down through Araucaria Valley and past the African Collection and on to the Main Lake.

BF, HK, HM, RH, DS 9-23



This leaflet has been prepared by the Garden Guides and funded by the Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide  
 For information about the Friends and/or guided walks, please telephone 8222 9367.  
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