

## A self-guided walk

November 2024

ABG

If our timing is right, you may not need a map to find the *Schotia brachypetala* (#9) south of the lotus pond, just listen for the cacophony of slightly tipsy lorikeets feeding on the nectar dripping from its deep-red flowers. If flowering is over, look for the short online video 'Drunken Parrot Tree at Adelaide Botanic Garden'.



See over page for map

\*An Australian native

- \*1 *Codonocarpus pyramidalis*** Slender bell-fruit South Australia  
One of three species in the genus, this tall, willowy, narrow-leaved species either side of the main entrance to the Goodman Building is now restricted to SA. Found as scattered individuals in the Flinders and Olary Ranges, it is under threat from goats and rabbits. Look for the bell-shaped fruits in the upper canopy. All three species in the genus are fast-growing, short-lived, and more common after fire.
- \*2 *Amyema preissii*** Wire-leaf mistletoe Widespread in mainland Australia  
After a heavy fruiting in February this year the large clump of wire-leaf mistletoe, here growing on a slender, red-stemmed *Acacia araneosa* from the Flinders Ranges is covered in flowers again. Hemi-parasitic shrubs in this genus, which get water and minerals but not sugars from the host, have very sticky seeds dispersed by mistletoe birds and singing honey-eaters among others. At least one or two new plants have established on this host since the original infestation three or more years ago. NB The name on the label is misspelt.
- 3 *Rosa 'Adélaïde d'Orléans'*** Cultivar  
This fragrant, exquisitely-pretty rose belongs to the class of "ramblers", larger roses that flower once in contrast to "climbers", which usually repeat-flower and are less vigorous. Named for Princess Adélaïde d'Orléans (1777-1847), this rose was introduced into commerce in about 1825 by Antoine Jacques, head gardener to Louis Philippe, the last King of France and brother to Adélaïde. A pupil of Pierre-Joseph Redouté, Adélaïde was a well-regarded botanical artist. Beyond the northern end of the line of rose arches is a statue of another Adelaide, who was a contemporary of Princess Adélaïde d'Orléans. Queen Adelaide, for whom this city was named, was the Queen Consort of William IV.
- \*4 *Ficus coronata*** Sandpaper fig East coast Australia, mainly Qld and NSW  
Just north of the path from the rose garden is a small cauliflorous fig tree with rough sandpapery leaves and small, palatable figs, each with a little crown of red bristles, often growing directly from the stem (cauliflory). A native of Australia, it grows along creeks and gullies in rainforest and open forest, where it is known to be a foodplant for the caterpillars of two species of butterfly, several rainforest birds and the grey-headed flying fox. The edible figs are green when young, ripening to dark-purple/black when mature.
- 5 *Bartlettina sordida*** Blue mist flower Mexico  
A fast-growing evergreen perennial from the daisy family, blue mist flower is native to the cloud forests of Mexico, where it grows in bright dappled shade, on moist, well-draining soils high in organic matter. A popular ornamental with big, velvety leaves, the inflorescence is a terminal corymbose panicle, 20-30 cm across. These large clusters of mauve to lilac to magenta-blue, scented flowerheads appear in spring. The fuzzy look is due to the thread-like styles with divided stigmas (female parts) emerging from the tiny flowers in each of the flowerheads making up the overall cluster. It can be invasive in wetter areas.
- 6 *Cotinus coggygria 'Velvet Cloak'*** Smoke bush Parent species from Southern Europe to Central China  
The rich burgundy-purple foliage on either side of the rill belongs to smoke bush, a drought-tolerant shrub from the mango-cashew family, often with sprays of purple plume-like panicles in late spring and summer. Only a few of the small, yellow flowers produce fruit, the rest elongate into wispy plumes, which from a distance give the impression of a smoky haze around the fruit. The wood was once used to make a yellow dye called young fustic, now replaced by synthetic dyes. A striking ornamental in any well-drained garden.
- 7 *Amazon Waterlily Pavilion*** False bird of paradise, lobster claws Mainly tropical Americas  
Best seen through the glass from outside the NW corner of the pond room, a long pendulous inflorescence of *Heliconia rostrata* has opposite rows of bright-red bracts tipped with yellow or green. In its native range, the pale-yellow flowers enclosed are pollinated by hummingbirds feeding on the copious nectar. Here it is very attractive to noisy miners, one of our native honeyeaters, occasionally bold enough to venture inside.
- 8 *Vanilla planifolia*** Vanilla orchid Mexico, central Americas  
In the adjacent northern corridor is a collection of bromeliads and orchids, including *Vanilla planifolia*, a vine trailing on overhead supports. Its pale, yellow-green flowers, open for only a day, are pollinated by a specialist bee which was unable to thrive on plantations elsewhere. Edmond Albius (1829-1880), as a 12-year-old slave on the Ile de Bourbon (Réunion) invented a hand-pollination technique, still used today in vanilla production, which relies on daily inspection for open flowers. A portrait of Edmond, in later life, features on packets of vanilla extract on display in the Museum of Economic Botany (MEB on map). He died a free man, but in poverty despite his contribution to the cultivation of the world's second most expensive spice.
- 9 *Schotia brachypetala*** Weeping boerbean Eastern Cape to Mozambique and Zimbabwe  
In the bushveld of southern Africa this handsome tree is a noisy, hive of activity when in flower. Nectar-feeding birds, particularly sunbirds, bees and insects are there for the nectar, and other birds feed on the insects. Starlings, monkeys and baboons eat the flowers, and later in the cycle monkeys eat the seeds, and birds the aril on the seeds. Between times, the leaves are browsed by game and black rhino eat the bark.