# MT LOFTY BOTANIC GARDEN

## 2026 July walk from the Lower Car Park

**We provide a copy of this walk on the Noticeboard at the Garden which may be photographed to take with you or there is a downloadable version on our website (https://www.friendsbgadelaide.com/guided-walks)**

To begin this walk, make your way towards the lookout and on your left, behind the disabled car parks, are flowering shrubs with pink and white clusters of flowers. On nearing them you will find a captivating wafting scent. These are ***Luculia intermedia*** syn. ***Luculia pinceana*** and are a great feature in winter as they are often not noticed but come into their own with their late autumn and winter flowering. It is native to the sub-tropical eastern Himalayas where it grows as a rangy mid-sized shrub. This walk features conifers which are critical to the world's ecology in their boreal environment. This is the world's largest biome, known as the taiga, with plants adapted to be cold tolerant in the Northern Hemisphere. The origins of these plants may be found in the fossil records up to 300 million years ago.

Make your way back out of the car park entrance where you drove in noting a ***Sequoiadendron giganteum*** or **giant redwood**. This specimen was planted by Sir Keith Seaman, Governor of South Australia, in October 1977 to mark the Queen's Siver Jubilee. Native to the Sierra Ranges in California, mature sequoia are known as trees with the biggest mass on earth. This specimen is almost 50 but is developing the characteristics typical of the species. In comparison to other specimens in the garden, it has clearly been inhibited in its growth by being surrounded by tarmac in the car park; nevertheless it is an impressive specimen. Note the developing cones on the lower branches. Take the path ahead on the right and up the hill to Magnolia Gully, admiring the magnificent ***Cedrus atlantica,*** or **blue Atlas cedar,** towering above on your right. These trees form a pyramidal shape with distinctive clusters of blue-green needles. The colour of the needles is eye-catching. An intriguing specimen behind you, on the slope to the right, highlights this colour. This is a mature grafted weeping standard, ***Cedrus atlantica*** **'Glauca Pendula'** which contrasts strongly with the original form. Continue up the path, noting on your left the **red-stemmed dogwood**, ***Cornus pumila***, growing in the boggy stream and catching the light of the winter sun. Further on, and on your right, is a ***Liriodendron tulipifera*** or **tulip tree.** Last October it had large golden tulip-shaped flowers amongst its dense leaves; now bare, its seed pods provide a unique winter feature.

Further up the hill is a ***Cryptomeria japonica***, which is the single living species in the genus ***Cryptomeria*** which literally means 'hidden parts'. It is endemic to Japan, as its name suggests, where it is known as '**sugi**' meaning 'past' or 'too much'. It is often found in Japanese gardens and temple grounds symbolising longevity and resilience. It is a large evergreen tree to 60m tall with a trunk up to 4m in diameter with red-brown bark that peels in strips. Its timber is fragrant and weather and insect resistant. Nearby is a ***Tsuga canadensis*** or **eastern hemlock spruce**, a coniferous tree native to eastern North America. They are long lived trees, with many exceeding 500 years. They grow well in shade in a pyramidal form and can attain 30 metres in height. The flattened leaves are arranged on little stalks, a unique and distinctive characteristic. Its fine-textured foliage droops to the ground, and it responds well to pruning making it a suitable hedging plant. Tsuga is a Japanese name, with the genus also occurring in eastern Asia as well as North America. Further on is a specimen of ***Taiwania cryptomerioides*** which is another single living species in its genus. It is one of the largest tree species in its native eastern Asia, reported to heights of up to 90m with a trunk up to 4m in diameter above a buttressed base. Named for the country where it was first described in 1910, it grows in the mountains of central Taiwan and locally in southwest China, adjoining Myanmar, and northern Vietnam. Its wood is soft and durable with a spicy scent resulting in it being in high demand for temple building and coffins. Due to its slow growth and extensive, illegal, logging, it has become endangered in many areas.

Continuing the path uphill from Magnolia Gully there are several different pine specimens. On the right ***Pinus sosnowskyi*** will be seen, with needles mostly in bundles of 2. Many taxonomists regard this pine tree as a geographic variant of ***Pinus sylvestris,*** **Scots pine**, which is the most widely distributed pine tree in the world, growing all the way from the Arctic to the Mediterranean mountains and to the edges of central Asian deserts. Across this enormous geographical area, the soils differ hugely which will help to account for the slight differences in the form of the trees. ***P.sosnowskyi*** is found in the Balkans and the Caucasus mountains. All trees in the genus *Pinus* have both pollen cones (male) and seed cones (female) on the same tree, a condition given the term monoecious. Later in this walk, dioecious plants will be encountered.

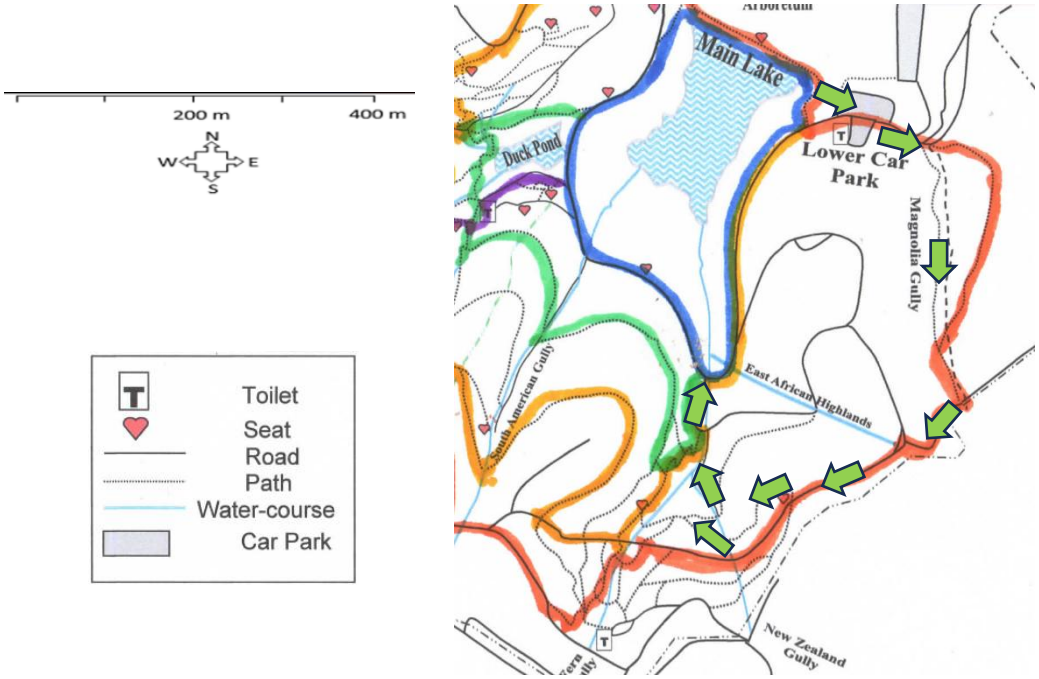
At the junction of this path with the road at the top of the hill is a large ***Angophora costata***, the **smooth-barked apple** or Sydney red gum. This is a close relative of eucalyptus trees and is endemic to eastern Australia. It differs from eucalyptus in having overlapping, pointed calyx lobes rather than an operculum or lid on the flower buds. The fruit has a ribbed appearance. The leaves are opposite each other. The trunk is often gnarled and crooked with a pink to pale grey bark which is shed in spring in large flakes to reveal new salmon-pink bark. Continue along the road which is flanked on the left with a bank of ***Euryops virgineus*** or **Honey euryops.** This is a hardy ornamental evergreen shrub native to South Africa. It is a member of the Asteraceae (daisy) family, and produces masses of tiny, bright yellow, honey-scented flowerheads from late winter to spring. The flowers, which are 8-10 mm in diameter, comprise both ray and disc florets which are borne at the end of stems of grey-green and feathery foliage. It is butterfly and bee attracting and presents a cheerful display at this time of year. The species name *virgineus* comes from the Latin word *virgo* meaning virgin or untouched, which well describes it in full flower. Continue along the road with vistas on the right back down to the Lake below. The slopes have a collection of araucarias, which are evergreen conifers. In Jurassiac and Cretaceous times (200 to 66 million years ago) they were found in the Northern Hemisphere and are now confined to then Southern Hemisphere.

Take the first path down to the right and on down into New Zealand Gully where there is a wealth of unique New Zealand conifers. On the right, on the downhill side, is an establishing specimen of ***Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*** known as **kahikatea** (Māori) or **white pine.** In years to come, it will develop to be an example of New Zealand's tallest tree and perhaps live for over 600 years. It is a podocarp and has fleshy seed cones rather than the woody cones seen in the pines. Further, these conifers are dioecious (pollen cones and seed cones on separate trees) and this specimen is the female. The seed cones will change from green through yellow and orange to red as they age.

Further along on the left is another New Zealand podocarp ***Dacrydium cupressinum*** or **Rimu.** This attractive tree with its weeping branches is an evergreen conifer. It boasts a stout, dark brown trunk and dark green foliage borne on slender branchlets. Rimu is slow-growing and long-lived, with an estimated lifespan of 600 – 800 years and can reach 35 – 60 metres in height. It is another dioecious plant where female cone develops into a swollen, fleshy, red structure (the receptacle) measuring about 6 mm long, topped with 1 or 2 hard, black seeds. These are attractive to birds, such as the endangered kakapo parrot, and are believed to be important to kakapo reproductive success. Continue back down to the Lake and either return directly back to the Car Park or turn left to enjoy the vistas over the Duck Pond.

JH, SS, SH, DS and RH

We are a group of volunteer Guides who prepare these monthly walks, all members of the Friends of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. The Friends would greatly appreciate if you would e-mail letting us know if you find them useful, or if you have any suggestions for future self-guided walks at info@friendsbgadelaide.com




This leaflet has been prepared by the Garden Guides funded by the Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide Inc. For information on the Friends and/or guided walks, please telephone 8222 9367or **www.friendsbgadelaide.com.au**