

MT LOFTY BOTANIC GARDEN

DECEMBER - JANUARY self-guided 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/garden-guides> (Mt Lofty Botanic Garden Lower Car Park).

This walk explores a range of lilies and conifer specimens in the Gardens in a self-guided walk suitable for hot weather. To begin, next to the garden signs and map, look for the tall *Lilium* plants, commonly known as lilies. Flowering from late spring and throughout summer, these popular and elegant plants have large trumpet-shaped and often highly perfumed flowers. Most species originate in the temperate to sub-tropical areas of the northern hemisphere. Further on into this walk we will see more liliiums, as well as other plants which also share the name 'lily'. Head towards the meadow display of Russell Lupins, *Lupinus x russellii*. George Russell, an English 'jobbing gardener", spent two decades single-handedly trying to breed the perfect lupin. The result was a selection growing to around 90 to 120cm, forming a well-established, leafy foundation with tall spires of tightly packed flowers which can produce a riot of colours above beautiful green clumps of palmate foliage. The flowers open from the bottom up making for a longer blooming period. Passing the display of lupins, the Sensory Garden is composed of plants designed to please the senses. Colorful salvias catch the eye with tubular flowers such as *Salvia greggii* 'Sierra Coral' which are full of nectar for butterflies and honeyeaters. The purple and white forms of Mexican sage *Salvia leucantha* have tactile velvety flowers. Both prostrate rosemary, formerly *Rosmarinus officinalis* but now reclassified as *Salvia officinalis*, and thyme *Thymus vulgaris* 'Silver Posie' also feature here and a gentle touch of the leaves will reveal their characteristic fragrance. Both herbs are popular in cooking for their savoury taste. Lamb's ears *Stachys byzantina* have grey velvety soft leaves which are delight to stroke. And for the sense of hearing, listen for the rustle of the leaves of the oak tree, or perhaps the pobblebunks (Eastern banjo frogs) which will hopefully still be calling from the nearby lake. On walking around the lake, look out for the series of art installations with their tactile Braille lettering. You should be able to find one installation specifically related to the 5 senses.

On crossing the wall of the Main Lake, enjoy the panoramic view of the surrounding trees which have different shades of green together with purple-leaved forms.... often referred to in botanical terminology as "Atropurpureum" forms. Many species exhibit this type of colour variant including Maples (*Acer* genus) and Cherries and Plums (*Prunus* genus). This effect was part of the original thinking by Allan Correy, the Landscape Architect tasked with the original Master Plan back in the early 1960s.

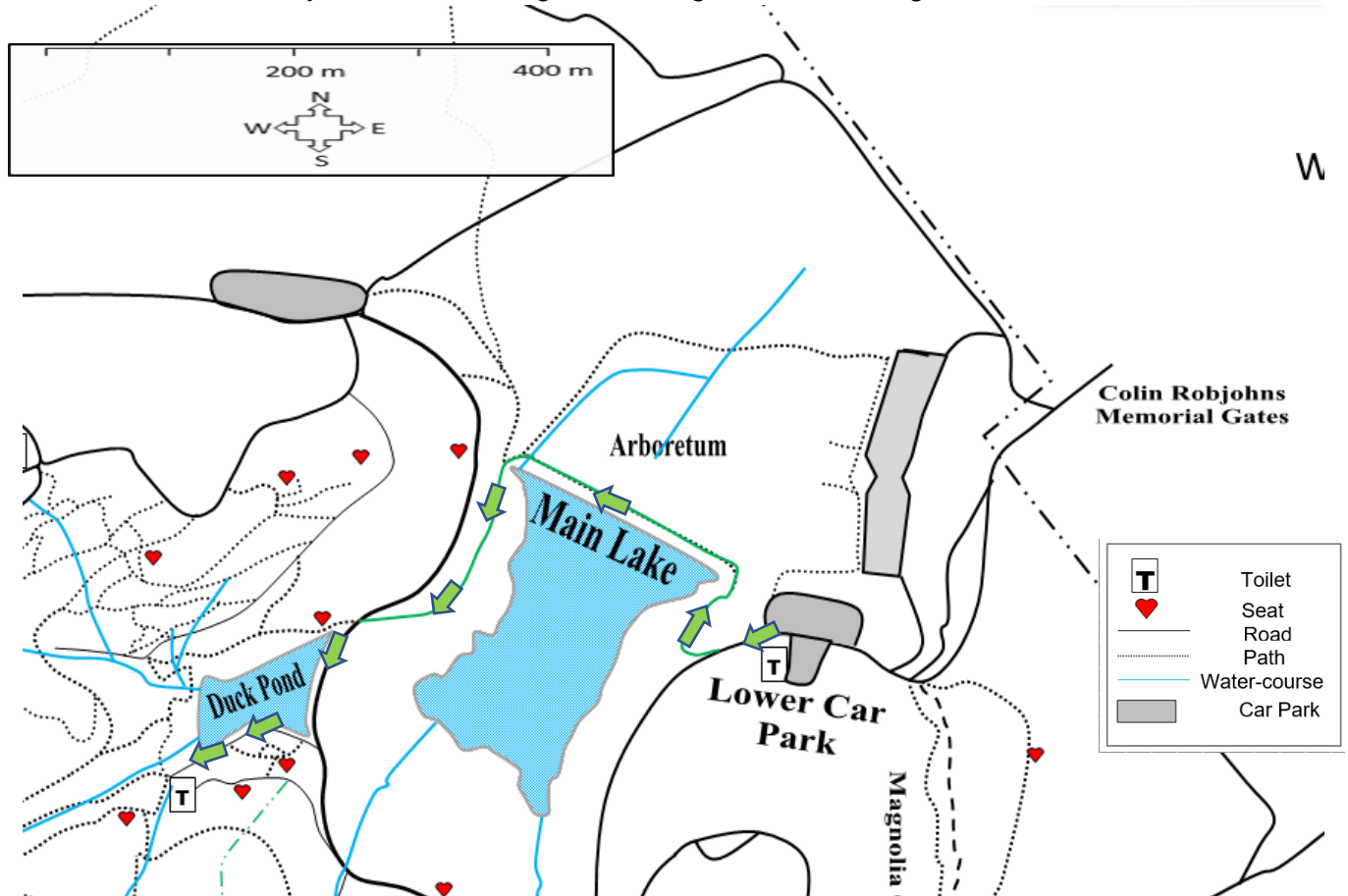
On reaching the roadway, turn left and continue around onto the causeway between the Lake and the Duckpond, noting the colourful daylilies or *Hemerocallis* cultivars. The common name alludes to the flowers which typically last for about a day before being replaced by a succession of others. Although the flowers have a similar shape to the true lilies we saw at the start of this walk, their growth habit, stem and leaf shapes are distinctively different. They grow from rhizomes rather than bulbs and have a fibrous root system.

From the vantage point of the causeway a range of conifer types may be seen. Below the causeway are several bald cypress, *Taxodium distichum*, from the Everglades in the United States of America. They are now reaching the age at which of their "knobbly knees" are obvious. These conifers are deciduous in winter and these knees prove their identity when not in leaf. At the back end of the Duck Pond there is a stand of dawn redwoods, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*. When in leaf they can be distinguished by their leaves having stems exactly opposite each other. When not in leaf their characteristic "Armpits" are visible under the branch union with the trunk. The dawn redwood was one of the first trees that were formerly known only as a fossilized record until they were discovered growing in remote central China in the 1940's. Specimens have now been widely distributed and they form a stately tree which is suited to growing in a glade. There is a golden foliaged form of the dawn redwood on the northern side of the Duck Pond. More *Atropurpureum* forms of Japanese Maple can be seen from here dotted around the edge of the Duck Pond.

At the other end of the causeway there are more liliiums of the Oriental type. These cultivars bear the names 'Chengdu', 'Kaveri' and 'Cocopa'. Other types of liliium are Asiatic and Longiflorum hybrids. Amongst these Liliiums is an attractive shrub, *Sambucus nigra*, or Elderberry. It is a deciduous shrub or small tree growing to 6m and native to Europe. The small, ivory white flowers have 5 stamen and 5 petals borne in large, flat corymbs above pinnately compound leaves. It was thought that they were primarily wind pollinated, but it is now understood that they are pollinated by insects. The fruit is a glossy, dark purple to black. Both the flowers and the berries have a long tradition of culinary use, primarily for wine and cordial. The form you are looking at is an "*Atropurpurea*" type, which has pink flowers.

Turn right and follow the edge of the Duckpond. More lilies abound on its waters, this time water lilies or *Nymphaea* cultivars. The flowers bear little resemblance to true liliiums, but are beautiful in their own right, and very significant in religion and art across the world. These are a temperate to hardy water lily which grow happily in cool climates, even surviving freezing temperatures. Colours range from white to yellow, pink and red. Adjacent to the small Gazebo note the two small specimens of *Gingko biloba* 'Mariken' the maidenhair tree. They are a slow-growing, dwarf form of the original *Gingko biloba*, with thick, semi-pendulous branches which are densely packed with fan-shaped green leaves. It is deciduous and during autumn the leaves turn a golden yellow before falling. *Gingko biloba* is dioecious (having separate male and female plants). 'Mariken' however is a male form that grows very slowly, 5 cm per year to 90cm high and 240cm wide. It makes a handsome contribution to a small garden or container.

Walking up the path past the dawn redwoods there is a stand of vireya rhododendrons growing under the camellias opposite these stately trees. Vireya rhododendrons vary from others in the genus by spot flowering throughout the year. Their range is the tropical high-altitude zones of Asia starting in Vietnam and through the Indonesian and Malaysian Regions to Irian Jaya and Papua New Guinea, ending with the two Australian species found in Far North Queensland *Rhododendron locheae* and *Rhododendron viriosum*. These species are often used in hybridizing and some of the cultivars in the display here are hybrids created using one of these two species as a parent and hybridizing with other species, creating a wide spread of colours and sizes. Our guided walk terminates here. We recommend visitors either continue up into Rhododendron Valley or cross the bridge to the Bog and Woodland gardens. JH, SH, RHx2 and DS



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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