



## February 2010

This month several festivals, featuring music, commence around South Australia. Why not wander around this shady oasis, discovering plants with links to music, and feel refreshed for festival participation?

The letter refers to the site location on the map on the reverse of this sheet

- \*A *Araucaria cunninghamii*** Hoop Pine NSW, Qld, New Guinea  
Admire this imposing Hoop Pine, so called as the bark splits in fine circular bands. The timber is favoured in the making of violin bellies and backs, and in the casing for the Australian built Stuart & Sons pianos.
- ☺\***B The Palm Grove**  
Walk past the endangered Chilean Wine Palm (*Jubaea chilensis*), look high to find the fronds of the Bangalow Palm (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*) on your right, then veer to the left. Can you find the hard sheath of the Queen Palm (*Syagrus romanzoffiana* syn. *Arecastrum romanzoffianum*)? Both have been used to make unusual stringed instruments. (See <http://www.palmfrondmusic.com/about.html>)
- \***C *Nelumbo nucifera*** Sacred Lotus SE Asia, Qld, NT  
Wander from the Palm Grove, to the shade of the huge *Ficus prasinicarpa*, dating from the late 1800s. Are the different stages of the Sacred Lotus evident? The distinctive dried seed heads, and the delicate flowers. Many Asian cultures refer to the Lotus in songs, as the pink flower represents ideal attributes - elegance, beauty, purity, perfection.
- ☺**D *Acer negundo*** Box Elder/Maple North America  
Sit and contemplate the Main Lake, with its islands covered by the spreading branches of the Swamp Cypress (*axodium distichum*). Can you think of a song linked with water? Notice the drooping flower of the Box Elder maple. The wood of some Maples has acoustic qualities suitable for guitars, drums, cellos
- \***E *Flindersia australis*** Crows Ash E Australia  
Walk under the canopy of the popular street tree, London Plane (*Platanus x acerifolia*), past the remnant River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) - Aboriginal women would dig for the roots, to use as music sticks: then to the tall, straight Crows Ash (*Flindersia australis*), named to honour Matthew Flinders, who circumnavigated Australia (1801-03). The hard, durable timber is used in the making of guitar frets and bridges, and flutes.
- ☺\***F *Podocarpus elatus*** Illawarra Plum/ Brown Plum QLD, NSW  
The magnificent, historic avenue (1866) of Moreton Bay Figs (*Ficus macrophylla*) invites you to pause in the deep shade of these large, tropical interlopers. Continue straight ahead to the Illawarra Plum. Its timber is very fine, used for making piano keys and violin bellies. Look for the unusual fruit.
- G *Arundo donax* 'Versicolor'** Variegated Giant Reed E Mediterranean  
Walk past the Red Bauhinia (*Bauhinia galpinii*), with its unique twin-lobed leaves, named after the 16<sup>th</sup> century botanists, the Bauhin brothers. Reeds used in organs, clarinets, and other woodwind instruments come from selected and cured stems of the Giant Reed. The mythical Pan (God of Flocks and Shepherds) is said to have cut the reeds and fashioned the first pan pipes, now a popular folk instrument.
- ☺\***H The Australian Forest**  
Can you find the chains of velvety, maroon flowers of the Sausage Tree (*Kigelia pinnata*) as you walk towards the Australian Forest? Enter this cool retreat, with its soft paths. The timber from the Bunya Pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*) is used by the successful Australian guitar manufacturer, Bill May of Maton Guitars. George Harrison and Carlos Santana owned Maton Guitars.
- ☺**I Museum of Economic Botany**  
Who could resist the summer shade of the Wisteria Arbors? Visit the Museum (open Wednesday to Sunday) where you will find bamboos and gourds, both used in musical instruments; the didgeridoo, for Aboriginal music.
- J *Washingtonia filifera*** American Cotton Palm USA  
The hard, black seeds can be used as a filling material in gourd rattles.
- ☺**K The Bamboo Grove**  
As you walk under the shady bower, look at the variety of trunks, colours and leaves. This versatility is evident in the range of musical instruments made from Bamboo, such as chimes, flutes, drums, saxophones, mouth organs, dancing sticks.
- \***L *Toona ciliata*** Australian Red Cedar NSW, Qld  
Sit and relax under this massive Red Cedar, now a rare species. The reddish, aromatic timber was used in the case of what is considered Australia's oldest surviving piano, built in 1834 by John Benham of Sydney.

☺ Of interest to children

\*An Australian native