

JANUARY 2012 WALK FROM THE LOWER CAR PARK

The map on the reverse is an enlarged section of the general map of the garden inside the brochure and shows the location of this month's plants



In the week before Christmas when this trail was planned, the band of guides has taken a small liberty by expressing their "favourite" places on the trail. We wonder if you agree with our choices and can identify the guides who enjoyed putting this walk together. You will find their initials in the square brackets in the text.

Take the path beside the notice board where on the right **red-leaved barberry, *Berberis thunbergii* 'Atropurpurea' (A)** is striking with its deep red leaves, though one must be careful of the nasty thorns. Strangely the wood is deep yellow. Cross the dam wall, looking across the dam to compare the many hues of green in the ornamental and native trees that ring the hillside, and off to the right Carminow Castle looks down on the garden. On the slope on the far side of the dam Greg Johns' 'Guardian Figures' stands out among the greens [MD].

The railings of the small bridge at the end of the dam wall are clothed in the coarse leaves of **crimson glory vine, *Vitis coignetiae* (B)** on the left, some displaying autumn tones, and **porcelain vine, *Ampelopsis megalophylla*** on the right which will have startling blue, violet and turquoise berries in the autumn [HM]. Take the path uphill beside the stone retaining wall. The stones were originally used as ballast in ships plying their trade around the coast of Australia [MT]. Follow the sign towards the rose garden, walking through part of the extensive Acer collection, then branch left up to the bitumen road, continuing to the right. There is a good view of the clipped Escallonia bushes which hold the bank of the new wedding lawn and gazebo if you look up through the trees, but we will see more of these later. At the carpark turn left between **swamp white oak, *Quercus bicolor* (C)**. The leaves of this oak, which comes from the US, are much larger than the English oaks, and can grow up to 15cm long.

As you walk up the hill, on the lawn on the right is the **Wollemi pine, *Wollemi nobilis***, bearing both male and female cones. Slightly behind it both ***Cedrus deodara*** and ***Cedrus libani*** display their distinctive cones.

Continue on up the hill, passing the Escallonia we viewed through the trees earlier, and walk onto the lawn where the new Gazebo awaits its first wedding. Take the path on the far side, passing between **Colorado spruce, *Picea pungens* 'Glauca' (D)** on your right. There is a carpet of attractive cones under the tree. Just behind the Picea, ***Eryngium yuccifolium*** has many globular buds (known as compound umbels) and sharp serrated leaves. Entering the woodland garden you pass between **variegated Hiba, *Thujaopsis dolabrata* 'Variegata' (E)**, the attractive foliage a contrast to the deeper greens around it. Bear right, then left, and left up the road where dogwood ***Cornus capitata*** may still have a few pale yellow bracts surrounding the tiny flowers, but many round fruits which will colour to cherry red over the summer. Take the first path on the left into the woodland and meander through this cool area of the garden, taking special care on some of the mossy paths. Emerging at the gardener's shed, pause to enjoy the wonderful view over the rock garden and duck pond, then back into the woodland area by the path to the left of the shed, continuing on the path up to the right.

Along the sides of this path a carpet of **scarlet strawberry, *Fragaria virginiana* (F)** has a good crop of small, scarlet berries just waiting for the birds. Continue on the path up to the hydrangea species which are now coming into bloom. The path is blocked by fallen trees and you will now have to retrace your steps but we thought this a worthwhile detour. Take the small path downhill by the fuchsia with tiny pink flowers then head to the right again. In the gully magnificent, tall tree ferns [DS] shade the woodland plants, then on the right up the slope **oakleaf hydrangea, *Hydrangea quercifolia*** has a magnificent display of creamy flowers held in erect panicles [SB]. While the flowers of the oakleaf hydrangea are only white, they age to a beautiful bronze in the autumn along with the autumn tones of the leaves.

Turn left at the **evergreen green alder, *Alnus viridis* (G)**, but pause at the corner to admire on the right hand side the bright yellow flowers of a tall hypericum contrasted with the plumes of flowers on a smokebush ***Cotinus coggygria***.

On the right of this path there are many Philadelphus species, some of which may still bear the cream flowers. On the left of the path the trees are ***Sassafras albidum*** from the eastern USA [HK]. Observe how the leaves can be oval or three-lobed and aromatic. Oil of sassafras is useful for repelling mosquitoes which would make it a useful tree near an outdoor entertaining area. At the break in the trees look down over the gully to the tree ferns again, where from this height it is easy to see the arrangement of the fronds which ensures each receives sunlight. Across on the other slope the hydrangeas and fuchsias make a spectacular display, and in this cool area of the garden the birds reward us with their song.

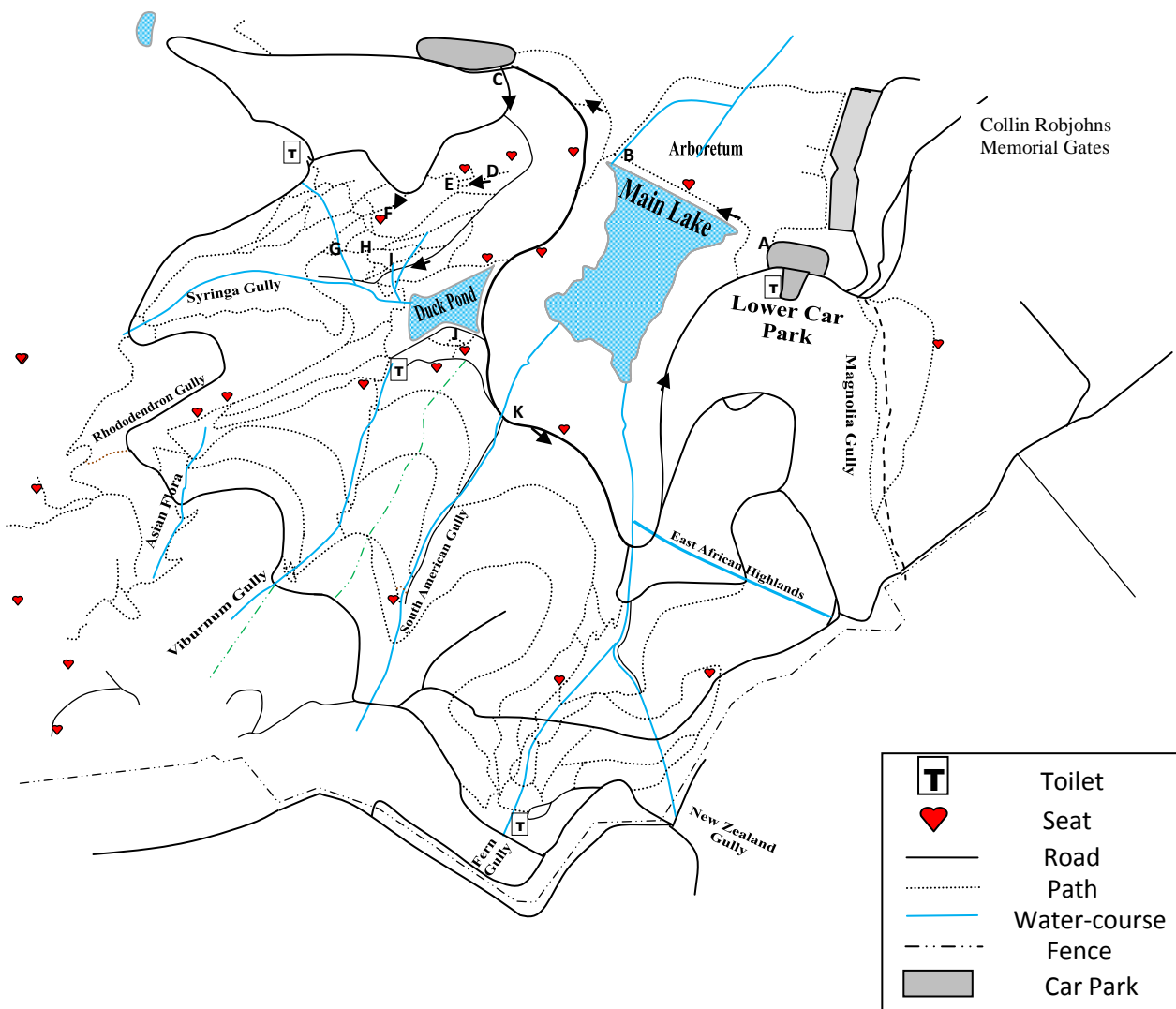
Keeping to the lower path you will pass a young **cork oak, *Quercus suber* (H)** on the left with its striking bark, before turning left downhill. On the right hand side, ***Betula costata* (I)** has fine peeling, papery bark.

At the concrete path, turn right where white liliium are in flower. At the bridge, on the right hand side, more liliium are just showing their buds, while Hostas are in full flower. Turn left at the *Cryptomeria japonica* where we noticed some small, new green cones and a few mature brown cones just at head height.

You might like to sit in the small gazebo overlooking the duck pond from where you can admire the soft foliage of *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* at the back of the pond, the deep wine-coloured leaves of *Acer palmatum* 'Bloodgood' by the path and uphill to the stringybark, *Eucalyptus obliqua* which surround the garden, and lastly on the right by the road the bright daylilies, *Hemerocallis*.

Rather than going straight back to the road, take the concrete circuit on your right where an unusual *Acer pentaphyllum* caught our eye. It has rather sparse growth and deeply cut leaves which will colour to brilliant orange and red in the autumn. From China, it is considered perhaps the rarest maple in the wild. Continuing on the high path through the bushland, you will emerge at the road where on the opposite side incense cedar, *Calocedrus decurrens* (J) is another tree with attractive, deeply fissured bark [DG]. The wood is used for pencils. Calocedrus belongs to Cupressaceae, the only family found on every continent (except Antarctica). The word 'calo' means beautiful, thus beautiful cedar.

HK, DS, SB, DG, MD, MT, HM 12-11



MT LOFTY BOTANIC GARDEN

This leaflet has been prepared by the Garden Guides and funded by the Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide Inc. For information about the Friends and/or guided walks, please telephone 8222 9367. Special interest walks for groups and bus tours are also available by request.