

MARCH 2010 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



Before you start on your walk, stand on the viewing platform and look over the dam and the Arboretum where you will see the first changes associated with autumn. Around the edge of the paved area *Berberis x smithii* 'Hancockii' (1a) is beginning to turn bronze and on the bank to the left *Berberis thunbergia* var. *altropurpurea* (1b) is deep purple. Now walk under the large English oak, *Quercus robur* (1c), noting the very large acorn cups on the ground, and make your way down to the dam and onto the dam wall. As you leave the paved area *Ugni molinae* (2) has a heavy crop of bright red berries, said to be Queen Victoria's favourite when turned into her breakfast jelly.

Stopping on the dam wall take in the full beauty of the hillsides and gullies that form this magnificent garden. At the far edge of the dam bright red leaves of Chinese tupelo, *Nyssa sinensis* (3) stand out from the dark greens of the other trees. To the right at the top of the range is Carminow, once the home of the Bonython family.

Heading straight across walk between crimson glory vine, *Vitis coignetiae* (4) and the vine known as porcelain vine in Australia or blueberry climber and turquoise berry, *Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*, elsewhere in the world. Whatever you call it, soon it will be covered in small bright blue and turquoise berries making a spectacular show. Head uphill following the sign to the Rose Garden and walk amongst the many species of Acer. On the right *Acer pseudoplatanus* 'Purpureum' (5) is showing a few light apricot leaves and has a heavy crop of very large double samaras. Climbing the path compare the size of the leaves and samaras (winged seeds) and the varied colours of the leaves. Taking the right hand fork in the path, on the right Chinese ash, *Fraxinus chinensis* (6a) has long thin samaras, while on the left *Fraxinus excelsior* 'Jaspidea' (6b) is starting to turn gold. Continuing uphill on the right hand side Parkman's Crab, *Malus halliana* 'Parkmanii' (7a) has many small fruit, as does Callery Pear, *Pyrus calleryana* (7b) from China. This tree is cloaked in lichen. Also worth noting along this path are two mature weeping elms on the left, and the Japanese flowering crab, *Malus floribunda*.

Walk uphill, then continue on the road alongside the carpark and up onto the lawn on the left. Looking straight ahead cedar of Lebanon, *Cedrus libani* (8a), has a huge number of large cones. To its left, *Cedrus deodara* (8b) also has large cones, and strange woody spikes on the branches where last year's cones have broken up. A little lower on the lawn the small Japanese umbrella pine, *Sciadopitys verticillata* (8c) with whorls of long, flexible green cladodes which look like, and perform the function of, leaves but are actually composed of stem tissue. This unique conifer endemic to Japan was chosen as the Imperial crest for Prince Hisahito of Akishina, currently third in line to the Chrysanthemum Throne. Mature cones from last year can be seen at the top of the tree, while tiny male cones appear on the lower branches. A little further downhill the famous Wollemi pine, *Wollemia nobilis* (8d) has many male sporophylls but did not form any female cones last year.

Cross the road and walk across the Tarn where daffodils make a bright display in the spring. This area was formerly a dam used to water the market gardens in the valley before the Mt Lofty Botanic Garden occupied the site. As you enter this area on the right Portuguese laurel, *Prunus lusitanica* (9), has a wonderful display of bright red berries, some turning black as they ripen. This tree is a species of cherry, native to southwestern France, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, and the Azores, Canary Islands and Madeira. On the far side of The Tarn blue Colorado spruce, *Picea pungens* 'Glauca' (10) stands out and beside it the bright ovoid berries on yet another *Berberis* catch the eye. Take the small gravel path through the copse of poplars, and if there is a breeze enjoy the sound in the leaves. On both sides of the path is "snowberry" and then variegated Hiba, *Thuopsis dolabrata* 'Variegata' (11), a valued ornamental tree in its native Japan.

Continue straight across the lawn towards the small shed, stopping to admire the view down to the Duckpond which seems to appear even more beautiful from this height. Just before the shed several large Spruce on the right hand side have a carpet of very attractive cones on the ground. Scientists have found a cluster of Norway Spruce in the mountains in western Sweden, nicknamed Old Tjikko, which at an age of 9,550 years are claimed to be the world's oldest known living trees. Spruce is known as a "tone wood", that is a type of wood recognized for its acoustic properties, and is favoured for the soundboards in top quality pianos.

Continuing straight ahead there are many fuchsia flowering, interspersed with the soft pink of Japanese anemone. Take the steps down to the next level and make a short detour uphill where several unusual *Hydrangea* are in full bloom. The dark blue flowers of the evergreen hydrangea, *Dichroa febrifuga* (12) will ultimately form metallic blue berries. Further uphill *Hydrangea aspera*, *Hydrangea macrophylla* ssp. *serrata* and *Hydrangea quercifolia* demonstrate the versatility of these popular garden plants. On the opposite side of the path a deep, dark pond adds mystery to this section of the garden.

Returning downhill take the steep path beside the grafted *Acer dissectum* 'Atropurpureum' (13a). On the right hand side of the path are several tall elder, *Sambucus nigra* (13b). While most of the creamy blossoms of summer have now gone, the trees are heavy with red and black berries. As the poem says –

“Never straight and never strong;
 Ever bush and never tree
 Since our Lord was nailed on thee”

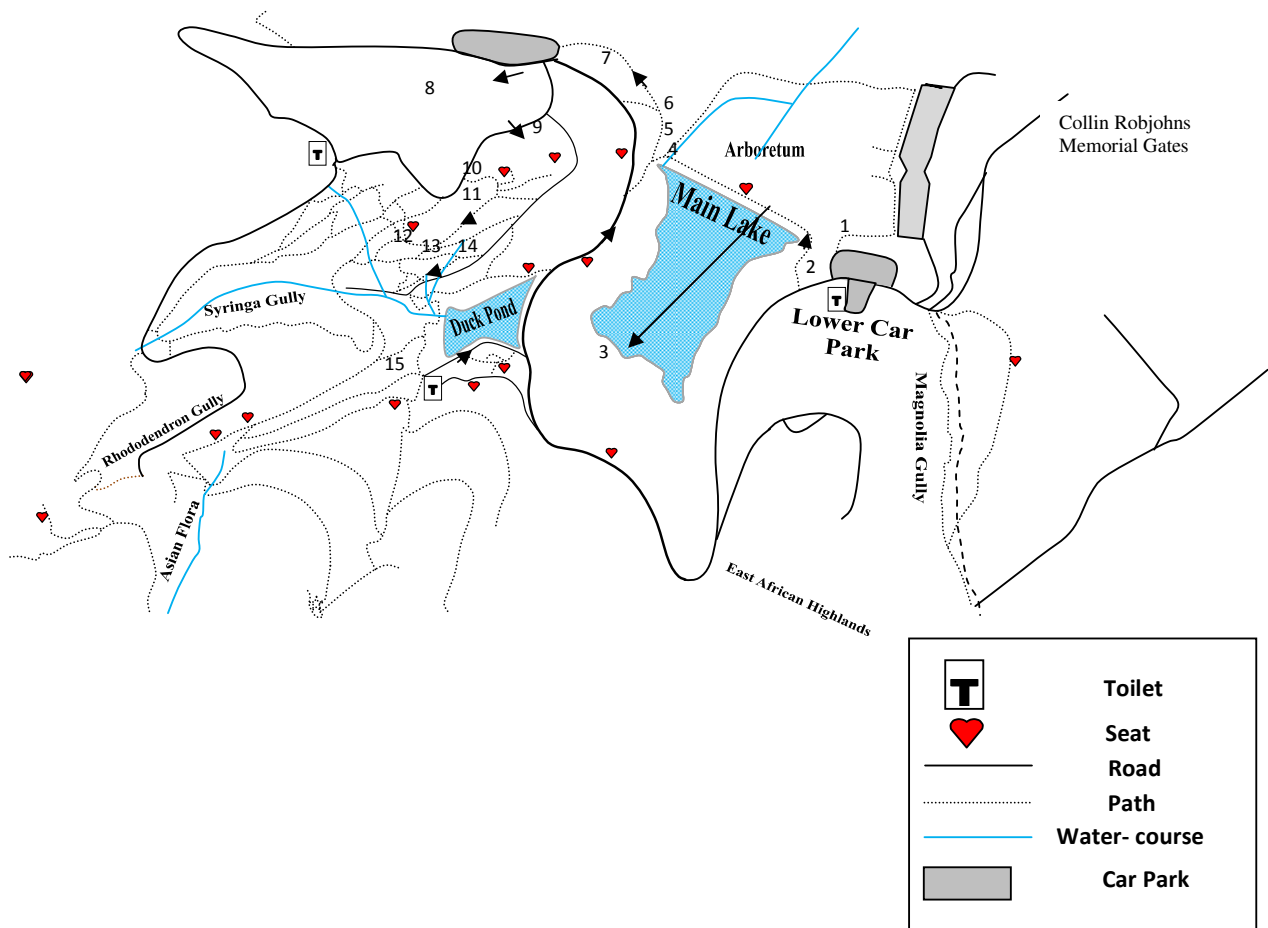
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traditionally the elder is either the tree on which Judas hanged himself, or the tree of the cross of Calvary. Looking back across the Woodland Garden there is a fine display of pink and white *Lilium*.

Continuing down the path under **Japanese maple, *Acer palmatum***, compare how different these species are to the ones first encountered at the beginning of the walk. The hillside at the turn of the path is covered in the delicate pink flowers of *Cyclamen hederifolium* (14) that appear in the autumn followed by leaves in the winter which disappear before the heat of summer. Cyclamen are native to the Mediterranean region from Spain east to Iran, and also in Northeast Africa in areas such as Somalia.

Cross carefully over the stones of the bog garden, then up the concrete path and over the wooden bridge where more *Lilium* are flowering on the creek bank together with lush *Hosta*. Across the path at the end of the bridge *Vitex negundo* var. *cannabifolia* (15) is covered in delicate mauve flowers. This species is widely used in Chinese medicine, and has been used since ancient times as a female remedy. When you reach the Duckpond take another look over to the far hillside, and then turn left at the main road and return to the car park.

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For a different experience in the Mt Lofty Botanic Garden, the volunteer Guides are offering a new FREE walk from the Upper Car Park on the first Wednesday of each month, starting at 1:00 pm. This is in addition to our FREE regular weekly Thursday morning walk which starts from the Lower Car Park at 10:30 am. And don't forget the regular monthly Plant Sale in the Lower Car Park on the 4th Sunday of each month until November.

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.