



Many plants in the Gardens are flowering or fruiting at this time of year. Don't miss the beautiful *Wisteria* arbours flanking the Mediterranean Garden or the imposing inflorescence of *Puya chilensis*, in the bed SE of the Amazon Water Lily Pavilion.

The numbers refer to locations on the map on the reverse of this sheet

- 1\* ***Ficus coronata*** Sandpaper fig Mainly coastal Qld and NSW  
 Feel the leaves of this unusual fig, once popularly believed to have been used to polish wooden implements and shells. The specific epithet 'coronata' refers to the crown of red bristles at the apex of the fig.
- 2\* ***Banksia blechnifolia*** Fern leaf banksia WA  
 First named by Ferdinand von Mueller in 1861 for its foliage, reminiscent of the fern genus *Blechnum*, this prostrate banksia is found only in a small inland area NE of Albany, WA. Look for flower spikes at different stages, from young, soft, rust-red spikes, to the oldest with flowers fading to a grey-brown. The species grows well in South Australian soils and is one of the few banksias that does not require fire to germinate.
- 3 **Mediterranean shrubs** Jerusalem sage and bush germander Mediterranean Basin  
 In this bed are two evergreen shrubs with the square stems characteristic of the family Lamiaceae. Both are popular in gardens with long hot summers. ***Phlomis fruticosa*** (Jerusalem sage) is not native to Jerusalem, but has grey-green, sage-like leaves, which resemble a species native to that area with the same common name. ***Teucrium fruticans*** (bush germander) has pale-blue flowers and a growth habit which lends itself to hedging or topiary. The epithets (fruticosa/fruticans) are both derived from the Latin frutex for shrub
- 4 ***Wisteria* spp.** Cultivars  
 Plantings for the western wisteria arbour were begun by Maurice Holtze (our third Director) in 1912. John Bailey commissioned the pergola in 1917. The eastern arbour was erected 60 years later. These beautiful displays feature cultivars of two common species: ***W. floribunda*** from Japan has the longest racemes, and stems twining clockwise, while the more vigorous ***W. sinensis***, from China, twines anticlockwise.
- 5\* ***Ficus macrophylla*** Moreton Bay fig Coastal Qld and NSW  
 Along this shady avenue, planted in 1866, the trees provide habitat for several other species, including *Asplenium australasicum* (bird's nest fern) either growing in the understorey or as an epiphyte (eg halfway along on the western side). The fruit salad plant (*Monstera deliciosa*), abundant at the southern end, also grows as understorey, but occasionally climbs, anchoring itself to the trunk by short aerial roots.
- 6 ***Bismarckia nobilis*** Western and Northern Madagascar  
 This stunning, large, fan palm is much valued by landscape designers for its silver green, waxy, palmate leaves. It has separate male and female plants which can grow to 10 m with a crown 3-4 m across. The only member of its genus, it is endemic to Madagascar where it is a conspicuous element of fire-prone open grasslands. The genus is named for Otto von Bismarck, the first chancellor of the German empire.
- 7 ***Dracaena ellenbergiana*** East Africa  
 Near the north fence, on the path opposite a large river red gum, is a stand of *D. ellenbergiana*. A relative of the dragon's blood tree, this slender species, with clumps of stems growing from a common base, can grow as high as 8 metres. The reticulate pattern of leaf scars on the silver-grey bark resembles a snake skin. In its natural habitat it grows in bushland on rocky slopes and escarpments.
- 8 ***Scilla peruviana*** Portuguese Squill, Cuban Lily SW Europe, NW Africa  
 A perennial bulb from the family Liliaceae (now Asparagaceae) with lovely blue flower heads which open over a period of three or more weeks. It can be easily grown by separating bulbs or from seed. A native of the western Mediterranean it was named in error when bulbs were delivered on a ship called the 'Peru'.
- 9 ***Sambucus nigra*** European Elder Europe, East Asia, North Asia  
 All parts of this small tree, except for the flowers and ripe berries, are said to be poisonous to mammals. Nevertheless, plant extracts have long been used to treat skin, respiratory and gastrointestinal conditions. The flower heads and berries are variously used to make chutneys, jams, jellies, cordials and wines.
- 10 ***Agave americana*** Century plant, sentry plant, American aloe Mexico, SW USA  
 Look for rosettes of large leaves, each with a tall candelabra-like inflorescence. Despite the common name, each rosette flowers only once, typically after 10 – 30 years and then dies. The panicles of flowers here are being eaten by sulphur crested cockatoos. Vegetative offsets ensure the continued growth of the plant.
- 11 ***Puya chilensis*** Sheep eating plant Chile  
 Common on the arid, high altitude slopes of the Chilean Andes, this stunning plant grows slowly and only flowers after 20 years. One plant can spread by offsets to colonise large areas. The rather macabre common name refers to the fact that birds and small animals may become trapped amongst the spiny leaves, providing nutrients to the plant when they decompose.