

SPRING 2020 WALK FROM THE UPPER CAR PARK



Leaving the carpark head down the road where on the left is a compact evergreen hedge of ***Daphne x transatlantica*** “**Eternal Fragrance**”, a cultivar from China noted for its small fragrant pink flowers.

On the right, a tall tree, celery pine, ***Phyllocladus trichomanoides*** or **Tanekana**, an ancient conifer from New Zealand, which bears leaves resembling celery tops, although the true leaves are tiny scales at the base of highly modified branches called phylloclades, which have adapted to perform photosynthesis. The strong white timber is valued for its strength and elasticity. The Maori people used it for canoes and houses, and early settlers for bridges, yacht masts and fishing rods.

Over the spring to autumn the right hand bank will have a wonderful display of colour from the many species of ***Salvia spp.*** which will attract the birds who feed on the nectar. Also here are the ***Kurume Azaleas*** from Japan. These compact evergreen shrubs have small leaves and masses of small flowers producing a blaze of colour early in spring.

These plants are part of the genus *Rhododendron* which is in the Ericaceae family generally favouring acidic soil and a cool climate and suited to conditions in this garden. There has been much hybridizing of deciduous azaleas especially using Japanese species. Look out for them throughout the *Rhododendron* Gully. The graceful weeping cherries (*Prunus* sp) in the Rosaceae family are ethereal in pink blossom, though the flowers are short-lived.

Just around the bend on the right hand side, ***Acer*** “**Esk Flamingo**” a maple found in NZ, a spectacular small weeping tree. New leaves are mottled white and pink and when the leaves drop the red bark becomes a feature. The older stems and trunk have green and white stripes commonly called snakebark maples.

Also in this area, ***Dichora febrifuga*** **Chinese Quinine**, an evergreen shrub in the *Hydrangea* family which flowers profusely from spring to summer, white buds opening to bright blue flowers, followed by shiny blue berries in winter. Native to China through to Nepal, the plant is considered one of 50 fundamental herbs and believed to have anti-malarial properties.

The attractive stone wall has mellowed over the past 20 years and provides the ideal situation for grey-foliaged fragrant pinks, *Dianthus*, to cascade.

Opposite / to the right of the road, a row of different species of holly, *Ilex*, are under-planted with more colourful Azaleas, being displayed with other plants to better advantage since their lower branches were removed. *Ilex* has over 400 species, many of which come from South America; in the Northern Hemisphere winter berries are a food source for birds and used as plant decoration at Christmas, adopted from the earlier roistering pagan festival of Saturnalia where bright-berried branches were given as friendship and used to decorate the dark houses.

Just before you make your way towards the Gazebo on the left-hand side, there are several ***Pentapterygium serpens***, **Himalayan lantern** plants native to the Himalayas and Thailand. In the Sikkim Mountains where they are abundant they usually grow on the stout limbs of lofty trees because they would not be able to survive against the dense ground vegetation. They are not epiphytic but a semi-climbing shrub preferring a rich soil. An attractive shrub with arching stems, clothed with box-like leaves and numerous pendulous branches of red tubular flowers blooming over a long period.

On the right-hand side of the road and behind the Summer House a spectacular early flowering ***Rhododendron*** ‘**Sir Robert Peel**’ is a mass of rosy-carmine funnel-like flowers. The tight trusses can hold 18 – 20 flowers. The leaves are elliptic to oblanceolate, 12 cm long, mid-green with thin brown indumentum below. It is extremely vigorous and can grow like a tree. Sir Robert Peel, (1788-1850) was twice Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

With the seat on your right as you carefully descend take the middle path and on your left are several ***Mahonia lomariifolia***, the **Chinese holly grape**, a large upright growing shrub up to 9m high. Native to the region between Yunnan, Sichuan, northern Burma and east to Taiwan. The foliage is borne in tufts at the top of the stems. The leaves are more leaflets than most species of Mahonia, usually up to 14 – 20 pairs of leaflets with an additional terminal leaflet. Yellow flowers are borne in racemose upright inflorescences at the tips of the branches. Between 7 – 20 racemes occur in each cluster. Large pinnate leaves cluster near stem ends. A very erect evergreen shrub may be single or multi-stemmed with long holly-like leaves. New growth is many hued and mostly reddish. The tall spikes of yellow flowers are followed by powder blue to dark blue fruit that look like grapes and are used to make jam.

Continue along the path turning left at the next bend and on your left is a grove of ***Phyllostachys pubescens***, **Giant Bamboo** or **Moso** native to China and Taiwan and naturalised elsewhere including Japan where it is widely distributed south of Hokkaido. Moso is an ornamental running bamboo best grown in a grove or forest. It can grow naturally to 10 – 12m tall. The natural spread of a running bamboo has no limit and is suitable for stabilising walls of dams or creeks and to prevent soil erosion. Moso is low maintenance and drought tolerant. Moso bamboo can grow at temperatures as low as minus 20 degrees Celsius. Young shoots are edible and crops are grown for the fleshy, savoury sprouts, fibre and wood for furniture. Leaves hang down like a waterfall and in Japan, ***Phyllostachys pubescens*** is called 'Noble Bamboo'.

Passing the bamboo clump on your left, continue straight ahead onto the path through some large tree ferns. Tree ferns never flower or produce seed but rather reproduce from spores that grow on the undersides of the fronds or from off-sets. The trunk of the tree fern is unusual in that it consists of a thin stem surrounded by thick fibrous roots. This means that the trunk needs to be kept moist as well as the soil in which it grows.

There are two predominate tree ferns here; ***Dicksonia antarctica*** or **soft tree fern** and ***Cyathea cooperi*** commonly called **lacy tree fern** or **Australian tree fern**. The soft tree fern has large spreading dark green fronds which are very hairy at the base of the frond (the stipe). Endemic to Australia their native range is SE Queensland, through the NSW and Victorian coasts and into Tasmania. They thrive in filtered light, lots of organic matter and plenty of water. The lacy tree fern has a thin, tall and upright trunk with distinctive "coin spots" on the trunk where the old fronds have broken off. The fronds are bright green and this tree fern tends to be very fast growing.

Veer left and now walk through a section of native bush, noting a few of the wildflowers amongst the **bracken fern, *Pteridium esculentum***. Small pink flowers of ***Tetradlea pilosa***, **pink bells**, and ***Caesia calliantha***, **blue grass-lily**, as well as ***Pultenea daphnoides***, large-leaf bush pea, may be found here throughout spring. Take the left path uphill through some of the collection of species camellia. These are the "wild" forms of camellias, often less showy and with smaller flowers than the more familiar cultivars. Our camellia collection comprises about 40 species out of a total of approximately 200 known species, and over 100 cultivars out of the thousands that have been developed. Camellias are evergreen flowering plants from the family Theaceae, and are found in east and south Asia from the Himalayas to Japan and Indonesia. They are of economic importance in East Asia, SE Asia and the Indian sub-continent, with the leaves of *Camellia sinensis* being used to make tea. Another camellia species ***Camellia oleifera*** produces tea-seed oil which is used extensively for cooking and cosmetics.

Species camellias to look out for here include ***Camellia tsaii*** with its small white flowers and wavy-edged leaves, ***Camellia yunnanensis*** with its white and yellow "poached egg" flowers, and ***Camellia heterophylla*** with larger pink pendulous flowers.

Throughout the Rhododendron and Camellia sections of the garden ***Pieris spp.***, in the Ericaceae family are an appropriate accompaniment as they appreciate similar conditions. These evergreen shrubs, previously called Andromeda, are native to mountainous regions in eastern and Southern Asia, eastern North America and Cuba and produce decorative clusters of lily-of-the-valley-like flowers in spring. Many cultivars have been produced giving gardeners in cool climates a great range of choices.

Turn left uphill towards the next seat, taking care where the path has been washed out by recent rains.

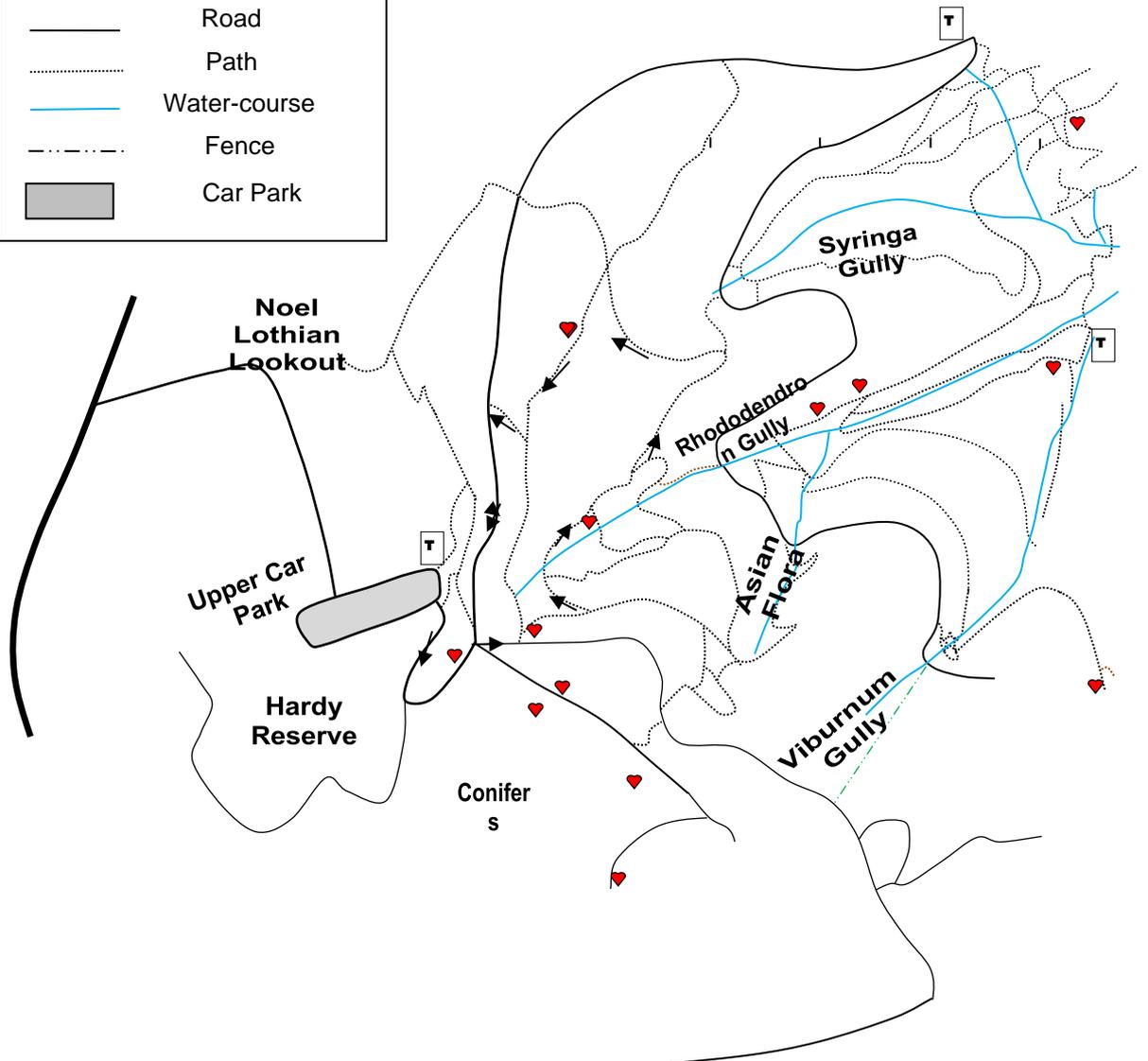
(Note: Paul's *Corylopsis* and)

Turn right and walk up to the road. At the road turn left and pass some of the spectacular *Camellia japonica* cultivars and return to the car park. Two unusual Japanese cultivars to look out for on the way back are *Camellia japonica* “Kingyo-tsubaki” or fish-tail camellia with its single rose-red flowers and split or dissected ends of the leaves (the apices) that resemble a fish tail. You will find this next to a standard weeping birch which overhangs the wall. Further on are two specimens of *Camellia japonica* “Hukuhau Kujaku” or peacock camellia, a pendulous or weeping camellia with narrow leaves and bell-shaped red flowers spotted with white.

BF, MT, TA, PL, JH 8/20

**MT LOFTY BOTANIC GARDEN
SPRING WALK FROM UPPER CAR PARK**

	Toilet
	Seat
	Road
	Path
	Water-course
	Fence
	Car Park



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