



A late-winter walk with a selection of plants from warm regions elsewhere, including the quiver tree from semi-desert areas of southern Africa, some palms from the deserts of the New World and the type species for the genus *Didierea* from the arid, red sands of SW Madagascar.

See over page for map

*An Australian native

- 1 *Fortunella japonica*** Kumquat South East Asia
 Cultivated for centuries in Asia, this attractive citrus shrub was introduced to Europe by Robert Fortune. It is slow growing but produces many small orange-coloured fruit with sweet-flavoured peel and sour flesh. Popular for candies and preserves it also symbolises good luck in China. An adaptable shrub that copes with a range of soil types and light conditions.
- 2 *Leucadendron 'Safari Sunset'*** Cultivar
Leucadendron species from the family Proteaceae, are all endemic to South Africa, but this hybrid cultivar of *L. laeureolum* and *L. salignum*, was developed by a New Zealand grower in 1962. Hardy and tolerant of most soils and low rainfall, it often flowers from autumn through to early summer. The inflorescence consists of a central, cone-like arrangement of many small flowers set in a colourful spiral of floral bracts. Loved by florists, about 40 million stems of this plant are sold each year by commercial growers, mostly from Israel.
- 3 *Monstera deliciosa*** Fruit salad or swiss cheese plant Tropical forests from Mexico to Peru
 This popular understorey plant can also climb into the canopy by means of aerial roots. The young leaves are entire but mature to form lobes and windows (fenestrations). A creamy-white bract (spathe) encloses an inflorescence of many tiny flowers covering the yellowish spadix (spike). As the fruitlets ripen over the course of a year the hexagonal scales fall off releasing a strong, sweet scent of pineapples and bananas.
- 4 *Fuchsia boliviana*** Argentina, Bolivia, Peru
 Named after German botanist Leonhart Fuchs (1501-1566), most fuchsias are native to South America, with a few found in Tahiti, New Zealand and Central America. The pendulous flowers of all fuchsias have 4 long sepals and 4 short petals, often in red and scarlet colours that attract hummingbirds, their main pollinators in South America. The small bunches of green to reddish fruit on our specimens will develop many tiny black seeds. They are edible and said to taste like kiwi fruit, but please leave them for the birds!
- 5 *Ilex paraguariensis*** Paraguay tea Southern and Central South America
 The leaves of this tree from the holly genus are the main ingredient for a South American infused drink called 'yerba mate' in Spanish and 'erva-mate' in Portuguese. The leaves are dried, ground and packaged as a tea, containing the stimulant caffeine, popular at social gatherings. It is also taken, hot or cold, for a range of complaints like headaches, migraines and rheumatic pain, as well as for fatigue and weight loss.
- 6 *Kalanchoe synsepala*** Walking kalanchoe Madagascar
 The rosettes of these small succulents with attractive, reddish margins produce young rosettes at the end of long stolons (like strawberry). The colony perimeter extends each year, giving rise to the common name.
- 7 *Didierea madagascariensis*** Octopus tree Madagascar
 Endemic to arid SW Madagascar, octopus tree is found amongst impenetrable thickets of similarly spiky plants, often reaching a height of 8-10 m. The fierce spines set amongst the twisted leaves are mostly arranged in whorls of four. The common name refers to its many long stems, which become more sinuous with age. These thick semi-succulent stems contain water and tolerate extreme temperatures and drought.
- 8 *Aloe dichotoma*** Quiver tree Northern Cape, South Africa to southern Namibia
 Now *Aloidendron dichotomomum*, the branches of this succulent species were hollowed out by the San people to hold their arrows. The trees are also a favourite nesting site for sociable weaver birds.
- 9 *Washingtonia* spp.** Californian and Mexican fan palms SW USA, Sonora and Baja California
 Introduced to Australia in the 1880s this row of *W. filifera* from California, and the slender *W. robusta* from Mexico was probably planted in the early 20th century. Both are associated with watercourses or spring-fed oases in the basin and range deserts of southwest America or northwest Mexico.
- *10 *Eucalyptus botryoides*** Bangalay, Southern Mahogany Eastern Victoria and south coastal NSW
 The rough, furrowed trunk of bangalay has reddish highlights immersed in the grey, fibrous, flaky bark which grades into smooth brown or pink on the branches. It is valued for its hard, durable red timber and is used for cabinetry, furniture, flooring, decking and veneer, as well as general construction. Koalas eat the leaves and ants consume the nectar. This coastal species, cultivated for shade, shelter and as an ornamental, is now regarded as an environmental weed in Western Australia and parts of Victoria.
- *11 *Angophora floribunda*** Gum Myrtle, Rough-barked Apple Qld, NSW, Vic.
 A few paces further on, gum myrtle, another tall, rough-barked eucalypt, has pale grey or brown fibrous bark which extends to the smaller branches. Grey-headed- and little red flying foxes eat the creamy-white petaloid flowers, which are also visited by white-plumed honeyeaters, regent honeyeaters and jewel beetles. It has been recorded as a host for several mistletoe species - no doubt spread by mistletoe birds.