

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

Lightscape

Artist Information Pack

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

[Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria](#) (RBGV) is one of the world's leading botanic gardens and a centre of excellence for impactful horticulture, science, learning and engagement. It is dedicated to safeguarding plants for the wellbeing of people and the planet and embraces its place at the nexus of **nature, culture and science**.

RBGV incorporates Melbourne Gardens, Cranbourne Gardens and the National Herbarium of Victoria which is a place of botanical and scientific research, the State Botanical Collection and the Victorian Conservation Seed Bank. The Melbourne Gardens site also includes the original [Melbourne Observatory](#), the site of the first observations of the stars and weather in Melbourne by non-Indigenous people.

Melbourne Gardens exists on the ancestral lands of the peoples of the East Kulin Nation, who for millennia met, lived on and sustained the land upon which Melbourne Gardens is sited. It was a significant site of gatherings for all five groups of the Kulin Nation with abundant land and the water of the Birrarung (Yarra River). It continues to be a significant site for Aboriginal Victorians and Indigenous living culture and knowledge systems increasingly inform our understanding of plants, the RBGV site and our own place within nature.

RBGV's vision is a healthy planet and flourishing community sustained and enriched by plants. Plants, along with fungi and algae, are fundamental to life on Earth. They provide the air we breathe, the food we eat, many of the medicines that heal us, and they house wildlife. We prosper and our planet benefits when we understand, appreciate and protect plants for their life-giving qualities.

RBGV seeks to articulate the interconnectedness between people and plants. We encourage people to see the plant kingdom as more than 'green wallpaper' but as a collection of species intertwined with and inextricable from our own stories and fate as humans.

RBGV's team includes scientists, botanists, horticulturists, conservationists, arborists, curators, public programmers and engagement professionals, administrators, facilitators, volunteers, guides and learning facilitators who are custodians of these treasured public spaces.

RBGV Programming and Audience Development

RBGV programs strive to be engaging, respectful, challenging and relevant to audiences. Our year-round program of creative and cultural events, visual art exhibitions, talks, nature play activities and learning, wellbeing and participatory experiences are informed by principles of program vibrancy, social inclusion with respect for the knowledge systems of the peoples of the Kulin Nation.

Programs provide opportunities to learn about and experience an emotional connection to and empathy for nature, plant sciences, ecology and the site's long and varied history. Programs also actively contribute to Melbourne and Victoria's creative and cultural life and social cohesion while providing opportunities for slowing down, encouraging nature for health and an active responsibility to care for nature, biodiversity and the land.

RBGV is a place for stories - for telling them, hearing them, for being part of them and inspired by them. Whether they're stories of and from the First Peoples, stories of plants, conservation,

scientific discovery or the story of our city as told through the Gardens, the common thread through all RBGV's stories is people. Our stories tell of wonder, curiosity and fascination, of a desire to listen deeply, to learn and reflect.

Living Collections and Landscapes

RBGV's Melbourne Gardens is widely recognised as one of the most beautiful botanic gardens and is a 'Garden of the World' with 98% of the world's sovereign nations represented through the plants and trees in its [Living Plant Collections](#).

The story of Melbourne's landscape history is evident throughout the Melbourne Gardens site: Ornamental Lake lies where the Birrarung, Yarra River originally flowed and eels continue to migrate to its waters; trees and plants that pre-date colonisation continue to survive and thrive in the Gardens. The Melbourne Gardens as we know it today was designed by William Guilfoyle, the fourth Director of the Melbourne Gardens. The paths and gardens beds of Guilfoyle's design are heritage listed and maintaining this design is the responsibility of RBGV Gardens' team and Landscape Architect, Andrew Laidlaw. Read more about the history and future of the Melbourne Gardens landscape in the [Draft Masterplan 2019 - 2039](#).

Plant conservation

Many of the Melbourne Gardens' plants and trees will not survive Victoria's changing climate of predicted higher temperatures and lower rainfall. RBGV is responding to this through the implementation of a world-first [Landscape Succession Strategy](#) and the formation of the [Climate Change Alliance of Botanic Gardens](#).

RBGV's Science and Horticulture teams seek to engage the public in caring for and raising rare and threatened Australian plants through programs such as [Care for the Rare](#) and [Raising Rarity](#).

Science and Research: National Herbarium of Victoria and State Botanical Collection

RBGV is the Victorian Government's major centre for botanical studies in plant identification, collection and classification. The team includes specialists in biodiversity, classification, evolution, biogeography, molecular systematics, fungi, conservation and horticulture. RBGV's work tackles innovative approaches to the identification of new plant species, conserving Victoria's rare and threatened species and the responses of plants to changes in climate, geology and sea level. Most of RBGV's [Science](#) team is based at the National Herbarium of Victoria at the Melbourne Gardens.

State Botanical Collection

The State Botanical Collection is one of Victoria's most scientifically prized assets. Comprising an extensive library collection of botanical literature and art, along with approximately 1.5 million dried plant, algae and fungi specimens, the Collection is treasured by botanists, historians, artists and scientists and is a critical resource for taxonomic study – the identification, description and classification of living things.

Historically rich, the Collection includes specimens collected as far as the 16th century, and houses Australia's largest collection of 'type' specimens: the representative material upon which the scientific name and description of any new species is based. Much of the collection is Australian (approximately two thirds), with an emphasis on the flora of Victoria. [The Significance Assessment report on the State Botanic Collection](#) provides further details about the collection.

Visit our website for more: rbg.vic.gov.au