



Must See

May 2024



Camellia sasanqua - Camellia Garden - stop number 2

This month's tour features rare and resilient plants that have survived for millenia. Find out more about our plants by joining a guided walk. Walks start daily at 10:30 am and in addition, Tues, Fri and Sunday at 11:30 am from the Garden Shop Visitor Centre.



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BOTANIC GARDENS OF SYDNEY

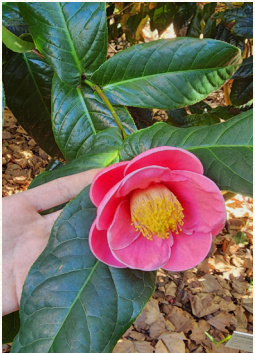
1 *Idiospermum australiense* – Ribbonwood



Endemic to the humid wet Tropics of NE Queensland the Ribbonwood tree originally described in 1902 was thought to be extinct until 1971 when the mysterious death of cows lead to the trees re-discovery. An autopsy revealed the cows had died from eating the toxic fruit of trees growing nearby. Its interesting spirally arranged flowers change colour from cream to pink to rose red with age.

Family: Calycanthaceae.

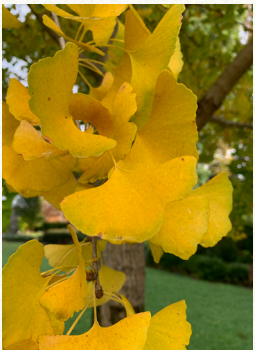
2 *Camellia amplexicaulis*



This species is extinct in the wild but cultivated in gardens in North Vietnam where the plant originates. It is very different to the commonly cultivated garden Camellias. It has magnificent, large, glossy green leaves and superb crimson new growth. The base of each leaf wraps around the stem and it is here that the flowers emerge as pink ball-shaped buds before opening to display a unique cup-shaped pink flower.

Family: Theaceae

3 *Ginkgo biloba* –Maidenhair Tree, Ginkgo



Ginkgo biloba, sometimes referred to as a 'living fossil', is the only surviving member of an ancient order (Ginkgoales) of seed bearing plants existing around 270 million years ago. Individual trees are either female or male and we have both types in our garden. Prized for their autumn colour, the trees' distinctive fan-shaped, bilobed leaves turn a buttery yellow colour. Ginkgo are also valued for their medicinal properties and edible seeds produced in summer. **Family:** Ginkgoaceae

5 *Strobilanthes cusia* - Pink Strobilanthes



Also known as Assam Indigo or Chinese Rain Bell, this perennial shrub is not only attractive, with its pendulous soft pink autumn flowers, but very useful. Historically it has been cultivated on a large scale in India and China as a source of indigo dye and is still the main source of blue dye for ethnic minorities in east and south-east Asia. It has also been used in traditional Chinese medicine for nearly 2000 years. Plants can be purchased at our Growing Friends Nursery.

Family: Acanthaceae

6 *Araucaria luxurians* - Lush Araucaria



This conifer is one of thirteen species of *Araucaria* endemic to New Caledonia. It occurs in small populations, on the main Island Grande Terre, both near the sea and in rocky inland ravines. It might look similar to the Norfolk Island pine but gently touch the leaves and you will feel the difference and understand both its species epithet and common name. Male and female cones are produced on the same tree, but currently only male cones (pictured) can be seen at the end of branches.

Family: Araucariaceae



7 *Burretio kentia hapala* - Dreadlock Palm or Rasta Palm



This endangered palm from New Caledonia has been found in only three locations on the main island. It grows in dense humid forest at altitudes from 50 to 400 metres. The main threat to the species is a lack of seedlings, due to grazing and degradation of the forest by pigs and deer. The inflorescences are unusual as they are covered in a felt-like covering of soft fine hairs that brown with age. The species epithet derives from "hapalus" - soft to the touch.

Family: Arecaceae

8 *Bauhinia x blakeana* - Hong Kong Orchid Tree



This pink flowering tree was found in 1880 at Pokfulam in Hong Kong by a French missionary who propagated it from a cutting. In 2005, scientists verified that it is a hybrid of two other *Bauhinia* species, *B. variegata* and *B. purpurea*. However, it is sterile. It does not produce fruit even when flowers are deliberately pollinated. New plants are only produced via vegetative propagation by people. This means all trees in the world are genetically identical to that first tree discovered in 1880.

Family: Fabaceae

4 Plant of the Month
Wollemia nobilis – Wollemi Pine

This year marks thirty years since the discovery of this critically endangered tree by parks ranger David Noble in remote gorges of the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, 1.5 hours from Sydney. Less than 50 adult trees remain in the wild but "meta-collections" of planted trees representing the genetic diversity of the species are being established around the world, and in "translocation" projects in natural areas of the Blue Mountains in habitats resembling that of the wild population.

Family: Araucariaceae (male cone pictured).