

Must See

March 2026



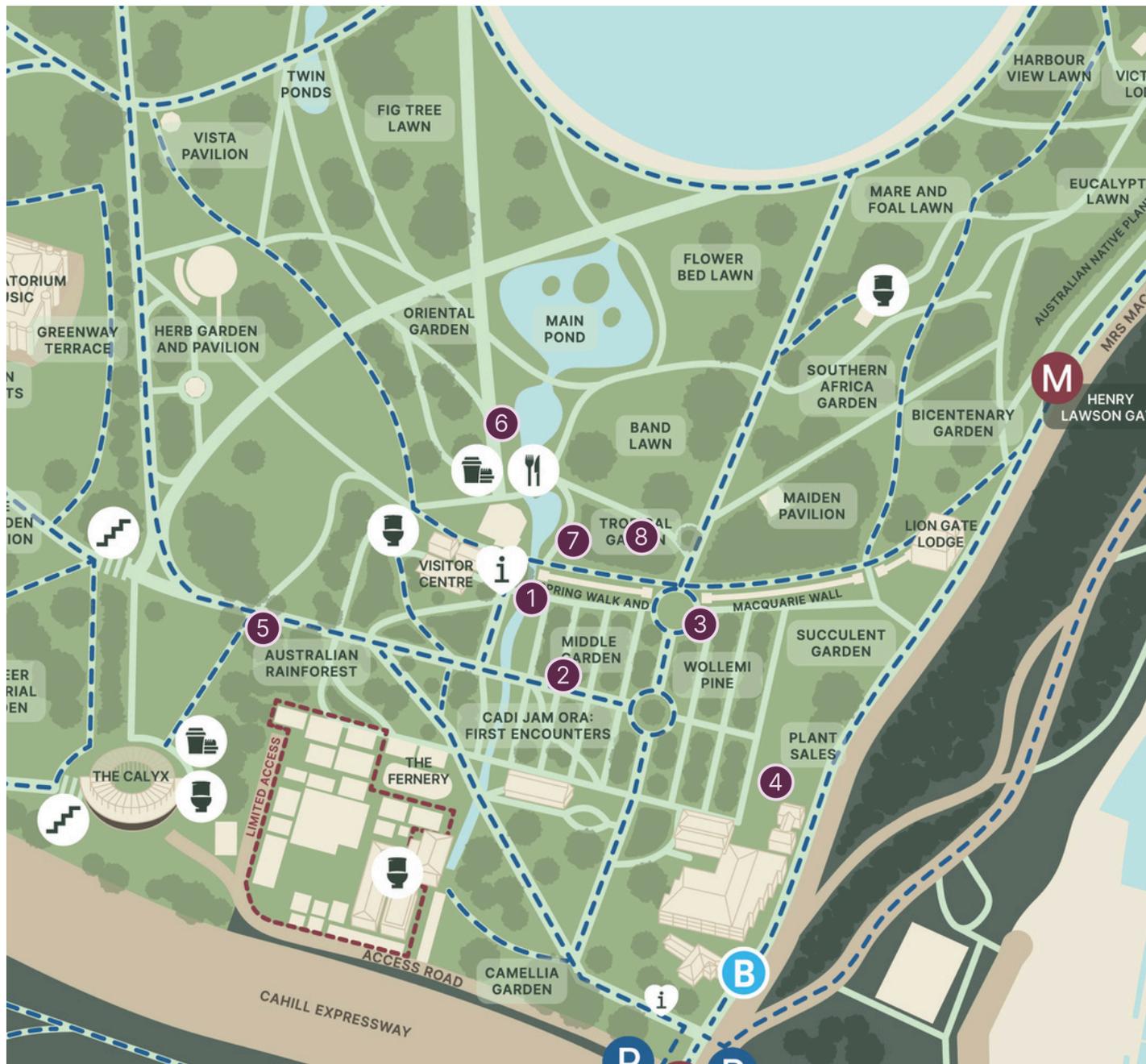
Golden Orb weaver spiders are harmless and common in the Garden in autumn.

This month's collection of plants is a reminder of the diversity found in the world's three hundred thousand species of flowering plants.

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2 *Medinilla pendula*
Baladu



This beautiful tropical shrub is native to the Philippines, growing in moist, shady, high-altitude forests, often as an epiphyte (on trees). Panicles of pink flowers, cascade down on long, pendant stalks. Flowers are followed by vibrant, fleshy berries, changing colour from pink, to magenta, then black as they ripen. This is an easily grown hardy small shrub for shady locations in warm climates.

Family: **Melastomataceae**

5 *Xanthostemon chrysanthus*
Golden Penda



Endemic to coastal rainforest from Townsville to Cape York in north Queensland, Golden Penda is famous for its 'fluffy golden flowers'. The shape and colour is due to the flower's prominent stamens – pollen bearing flower parts. Growing to 10-12 metres in cultivation, Golden Penda is one of forty-seven species within the genus *Xanthostemon* whose name is from the classical Greek words, 'Xantho' – yellow and 'stemon' – stamen.

Family: **Myrtaceae**

7 *Ceiba speciosa*
Silk Floss Tree



This deciduous tree is native to tropical and subtropical forests of South America. In autumn, showy creamy-pink flowers unfurl on branch tips, calling to flying pollinators such as bats. Flowers are followed by avocado-shaped fruit which open to release silk-like floss and black seeds. The floss is used for packaging, papermaking and ropes. Young trees often have thorns for protection and green trunks for photosynthesis. Old trees develop enormous buttress roots.

Family: **Malvaceae**

3 *Tabernaemontana cerifera*
Paper Gardenia



The delicate Paper Gardenia is native to New Caledonia and like other members of the family it exudes poisonous, white, latex-like sap when wounded. The five petaled white star-shaped flowers appear throughout summer and have a fragrance that is stronger at night. The bases of the petals are fused to make a long thin nectar containing tube. Flowers are pollinated by moths, active at night.

Family: **Apocynaceae**

6 *Eriocapitella x hybrida*
Windflower



Wander through our Oriental Garden and look for these elegant white flowers fluttering in the breeze. *Eriocapitella x hybrida* is a group of perennials with saucer-shaped flowers in the buttercup family, produced by crossing three Chinese species, long cultivated in Japan. Windflowers are a feature of autumn gardens, popular in perennial borders and woodland gardens. They also feature at the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden Mount Tomah.

Family: **Ranunculaceae**

8 *Mesua ferrea*
Sri Lankan Ironwood



Native to the rainforests of South and Southeast Asia, this conical tree holds both spiritual and practical significance. The national tree of Sri Lanka, it is revered in Buddhism, where it is believed the next Buddha will attain enlightenment beneath its branches. The 'poached-egg' flowers – white petals encircling a burst of golden stamens – are delicately fragrant and prized for perfumes and temple offerings and its timber used for construction.

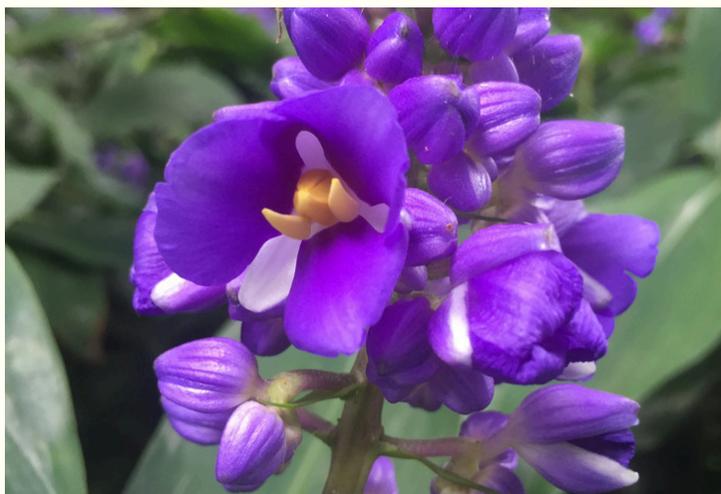
Family: **Calyophyllaceae**

4 *Cereus uruguayanus* 'Monstrosus'
Monstrous Apple Cactus



The monstrous apple cactus earns its name from its twisting, knobby stems and the red, apple-like fruit it produces. This unusual, mutated form stores water in its bulging stems, allowing it to expand and contract with changing moisture – an excellent adaptation to dry habitats. Fast-growing and dramatic, it bears large white flowers that bloom at night and, in its native South America, can reach an impressive 15 metres tall.

Family: **Cactaceae**



Plant of the Month

1 *Dichorisandra thyrsiflora*
Blue Ginger

Native to southeastern Brazil, Blue Ginger illuminates a shady spot with its vivid blue flowers. However, it is not a true ginger but a member of the Spiderwort family. *Dichorisandra* pollen is shed from terminal pores in the male parts of flowers (anthers). Researchers have concluded that the release of this pollen is stimulated by 'buzz' pollinators. These pollinators, usually bees, vibrate or agitate the flower and stimulate the release of pollen.

Family: **Commelinaceae**