



Must See

May 2026



Cymbidium cultivars, Boat Orchids, find them near Stop 4.

Autumn is the season for flowers, fruit and colourful foliage. All feature on this month's tour.

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**BOTANIC
GARDENS
OF SYDNEY**

2 *Davidsonia pruriens*
Ooray, Davidson's Plum



You may have eaten the fruit of this rainforest tree endemic to far North Queensland. It's an important food for Aboriginal cultural groups that is also used by home gardeners and chefs to make scrumptious jams, sauces and wine. Ripening in autumn, purplish-blue, plum-sized fruit grow in clusters directly from stems (ramiflory) and trunk (cauliflory) of the tree. The fruit's inner flesh is crimson, tangy-sour in taste, and rich in antioxidants.

Family: Cunoniaceae

3 *Ginkgo biloba*
Ginkgo or Maidenhair Tree



The Ginkgo, sometimes referred to as a 'living fossil', is the only surviving member of an ancient order of seed-bearing plants originating 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 when the trees' distinctive fan-shaped bilobed leaves turn a buttery yellow colour. They are also revered for their longevity, and edible seeds.

Family: Ginkgoaceae

4 *Whitfieldia elongata*
White Candles



Acanthaceae is a large family of flowering plants comprising nearly 250 genera and around 2,500 species. Diversity is highest in tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world. It includes herbaceous plants, shrubs, woody climbers and epiphytic species. Pictured is *Whitfieldia elongata*, White Candles – a striking Tropical West Africa shrub that prefers semi-shade and moderate water. Discover more vibrant members of this family well-suited to Sydney's climate, nearby in the Middle Garden.

Family: Acanthaceae

5 *Abutilon x hybridum*
Chinese Lanterns



The Chinese Lanterns' pendulous, lantern shaped flowers – similar to a hibiscus, bloom almost year-round in a range of colours including white, yellow, red or orange. Although called Chinese Lanterns this plant is a complex mix of hybrids and does not occur in the wild. The leaves are mild to dark green in colour and have an almost velvet touch due to the hairs on both the upper and lower surfaces.

Family: Malvaceae

6 *Encephalartos lebomboensis*
Lebombo Cycad



This beautiful cycad is native to the evergreen forests in the Rift Valley province of north-central Kenya. Cycads have separate male and female plants (dioecious). Our female plant is producing a bright yellow, cylindrical cone that is breaking up to reveal orange seeds that are highly poisonous. A combination of Cycads' slow-growing ways, deforestation of their habitats and the illegal plant trade has led to these ancient plants becoming the most endangered plant group on Earth.

Family: Zamiaceae

7 *Crescentia mirabilis*
Wonderful Calabash Tree



Located near the Mare and Foa statue, The Wonderful Calabash Tree is endemic to Cuba. *Crescentia* species are collectively known as Calabash for their large woody fruits that resemble gourds. Flowers flare out directly from the trunk (cauliflory) and or branches (ramiflory) and are said to be pollinated by night flying insects and other fauna. The large, round fruits are obvious at this time of year and the shells are traditionally used to make containers and musical instruments.

Family: Bignoniaceae

8 *Crataegus x lavalleei*
Lavelle Hawthorn



This deciduous tree is a spontaneous hybrid between two Hawthorn species, discovered in 1870 growing at the Arboretum Segrez near Paris. It has lustrous green foliage and showy white flowers in summer, followed by scarlet berries ('haws') in autumn, which hang like red lanterns on bare stems throughout winter. Hawthorn has long been called 'the heart herb' – its antioxidant-rich berries have been used medicinally for centuries, for heart and circulatory conditions.

Family: Rosaceae



Plant of the Month

1 *Idiospermum australiense*
Ribbonwood

First discovered in 1902 near Innisfail, north-eastern Queensland, this species was later thought to be extinct after its habitat was cleared for sugar cane farming. It was fortunately rediscovered in 1971 near the Daintree River, when six cattle died of poisoning and a subsequent postmortem revealed the large billiard ball size seeds of this lost species were the likely culprit. The flowers comprised of spirally arranged sepals age from cream to dark red and have a subtle fragrance.

Family: Calycanthaceae