



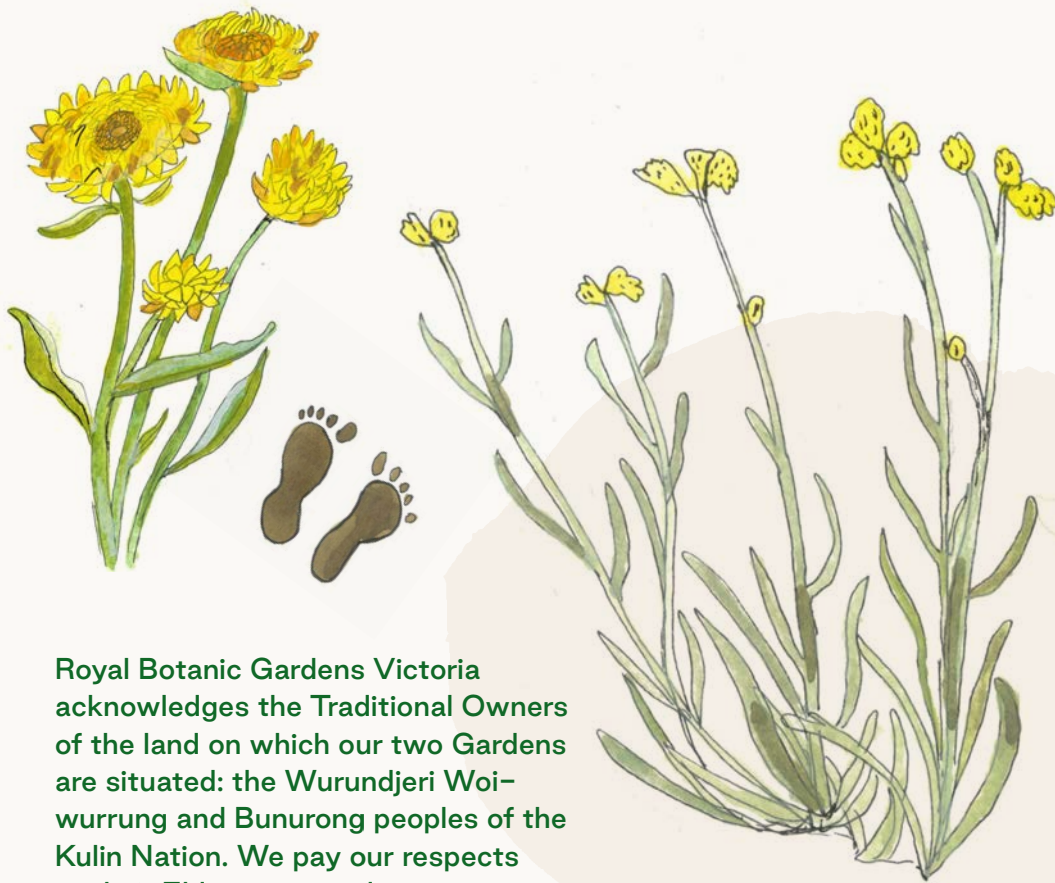
Slow down and connect



A Guide to Wellbeing at
Royal Botanic Gardens
Cranbourne



Illustrations by Claire Mosley



Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which our two Gardens are situated: the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung and Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and acknowledge their continued custodianship and deep spiritual connection to these lands and waters. We honour the strength and richness of over 60,000 years of continuous Aboriginal culture and recognise the vital role of future generations as stewards of culture and Country.

Welcome

This booklet is designed for grown-ups to read along with young people as they explore.

It aims to encourage wellbeing by helping visitors of all ages connect with the natural world at Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne. Through simple mindfulness activities and sensory experiences, it encourages slowing down, noticing the beauty around us, and fostering a deeper sense of calm, curiosity and joy.

The experiences in this booklet have been curated to link to evidence-based practices which support healthy bodies and minds. To find out more visit rbg.vic.gov.au/learn

Please help us care for the Gardens by staying on the paths, leaving all plants where they grow, and letting the animals enjoy their homes undisturbed.

There are no public rubbish bins at Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne. Please take your rubbish with you.



How to use this Guide:

Explore a range of journeys to various precincts of the Gardens.

Allow 45 minutes or longer to explore each precinct at a gentle pace.

Estimated time to each precinct from the Visitor Centre:

Eucalypt Walk, Gondwana Garden and Ian Potter Lakeside Lawn:
5–10 min

Serpentine Path, Desert Discovery Camp, Gibson Hill, Weird and Wonderful Garden:
5–10 min

Cranbourne Bushland:
15–20 min

Map:

Scan the QR code to access our interactive map and more information, or pick up a hard copy from the Visitor Centre





Eucalypt Walk, Gondwana Garden and Ian Potter Lakeside Lawn

Slow down and tune into nature with a gentle stroll along the eastern edge of the Australian Garden. Awaken your senses as you wander through the Eucalypt Walk and past the Peppermints. Then, step back in time in the Gondwana Garden, where you can trace the ancient story of plant evolution. Finish your walk on the lush Ian Potter Lakeside Lawn, where you can relax and enjoy calming views across the lake.



Find a comfortable spot to sit and enjoy the view across the lake – spend 10 minutes observing the world around you.

Take your nose on an adventure through the Peppermint Garden – did you know that plants release a special chemical which can help to regulate emotions, and boost our mood?

Listen to the gentle sounds of water trickling near the Gondwana Garden.

Along Eucalypt Walk, search for leaves that have fallen on the path. Observe the different networks and patterns in the veins. Try crushing one in your hands to release the essential oils. Do the smells trigger anything in your memory or imagination?

On the grassy lawn, lie back and watch the clouds drift by. Notice their shapes, colours, and how they slowly change. Let your mind wander and imagine stories or creatures in the sky. I wonder where the clouds have travelled from?



Serpentine Path, Desert Discovery Camp, Gibson Hill, Weird and Wonderful Garden

This precinct leads you through the heart of the Australian Garden. Follow the winding Serpentine Path and take in sweeping views of the iconic Red Sand Garden from Gibson Hill. Be surprised by the bold shapes and striking colours in the Weird and Wonderful Garden, where plants and rock formations take on unexpected forms. Pause for a restful break at the Desert Discovery Camp and soak up the unique beauty of this arid landscape.

Dig in the sand in the Desert Discovery Camp. Can you notice the change in temperature as you dig? Look out for the footprints in the steps – what animals might they belong to?



Shadow Hunt: Search for the most interesting, longest, or tiniest shadows in the garden. What's making them? Can you make an interesting shadow?

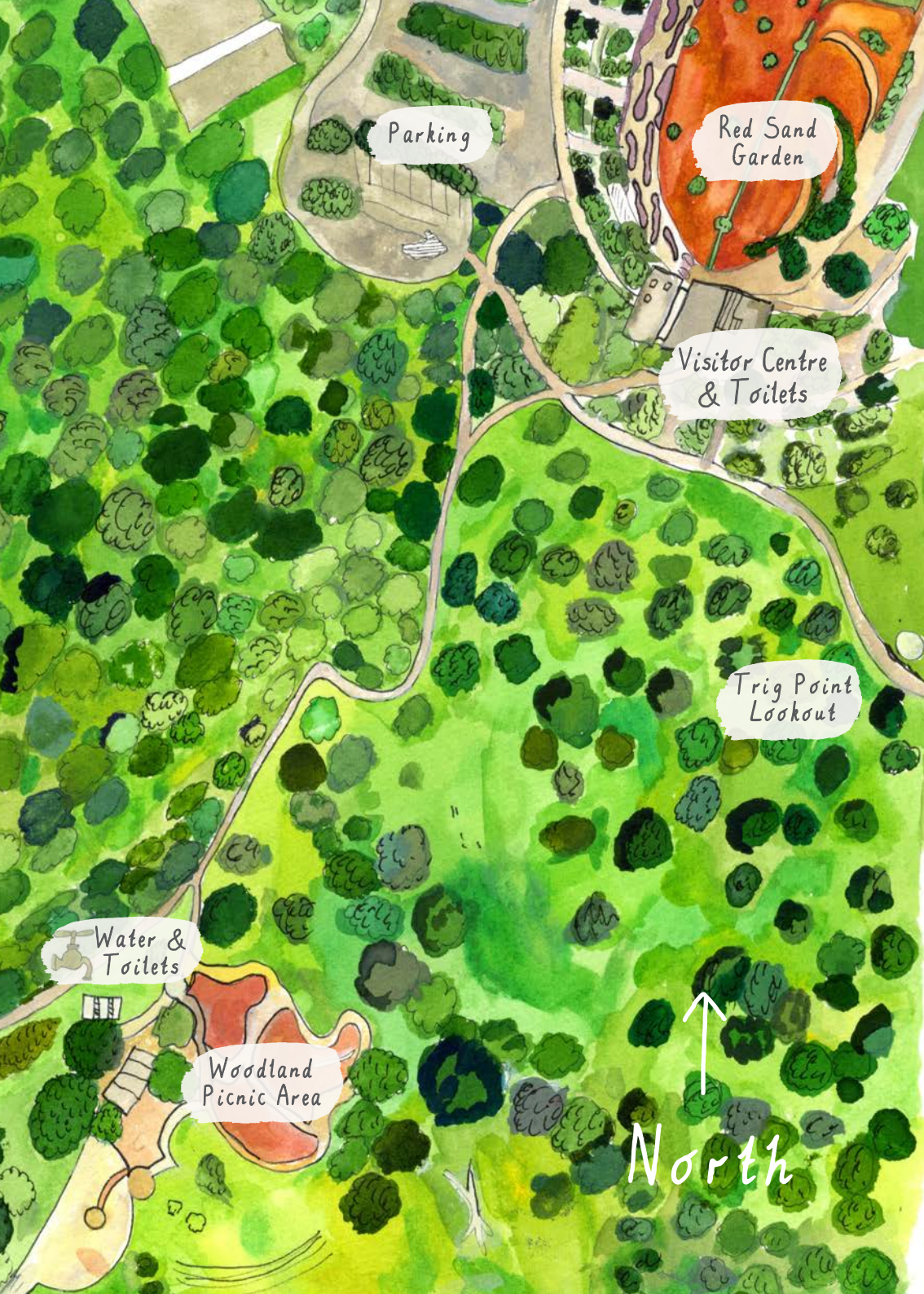


Enjoy the view from the top of Gibson Hill.

What is the quietest/furthest sound you can hear?

Stand on the bridge at the bottom of the Rockpool Waterway. Listen to the sounds of the water as it trickles through the landscape, then forms a waterfall.





Cranbourne Bushland

This precious remnant of native heathlands, woodlands and wetlands supports more than 450 indigenous plant species and over 215 native animals including the endangered Southern Brown Bandicoot. Ideal for mindful walks, nature play, birdwatching or simply breathing deeply in the open air, the bushland is an excellent place for exploration and nature connection.

Sometimes areas, tracks and facilities need to be closed, particularly during Fire Danger season.



*Seasonal Change – look around you,
what is happening in nature?
How are the animals behaving?
How might this be different in
six months' time?*

*Listen to bird sounds –
find a spot to stop and
sit while listening closely.
Move from one sound to the
next, listen in different
directions.*

*Scats and Tracks – Become a
nature detective and look for clues
left behind by animals that call this
bushland home. Can you find any
footprints, feathers, scratch marks,
or scats (poo)? What do they tell
you about who's been here?*

Remember
*Snakes and other creatures
might live here too.*



*In the Woodland Picnic
Area, lie back on the
hammocks and look up at
the trees. Notice the shifts
in light, and how the
branches and leaves move.*



You can do these things anywhere in the Gardens or near your home. What do you like to do when you're outside?

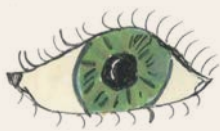
Things you can do anywhere in nature



Imagine you're a tiny creature.

What would the grass look like?
Where would you hide, rest or find food?

Letting our imagination wander like this builds our sense of wonder and can help us build empathy and problem-solving skills



Use your eyes like a magnifying glass.

Shift your focus from the big, open landscape to the tiny world around you—look closely at textures, colours, and hidden details.

Focusing on small things in nature can help quiet our minds, reduce stress, and help us to feel grounded.



Try balancing on a fallen log or stepping across stones—feel how your body adjusts and moves to stay steady.

Activities like this help build body awareness coordination, confidence and focus.



Gently spin in a circle and notice how it feels when you stop.

This movement wakes up our sense of balance and can help our brains feel more alert and organised.



Use your nose to explore.

Can you find something earthy, sweet or strange? Noticing natural scents can help calm our minds and bring our attention into the present moment.





Try your hand at birdwatching.
How do different birds move, sound, behave?
I wonder why?



Lie back and watch the clouds drift by.
Notice their shapes, colours, and how
they slowly change. Let your mind
wander and imagine stories or creatures
in the sky.

This kind of slow, open-ended play can
help our minds enter a restful
and imaginative state.



Things you can do
anywhere in nature



Listen carefully in every direction—
north, south, east, west, up and
down. What sounds can you hear?

Tuning into the sounds around us
can help quiet our thoughts,
calm our bodies, and deepen our
connection with nature.



Take your time to touch and explore—
can you find five different textures in
nature? Notice how some feel rough,
smooth, soft, or bumpy.

Feeling these textures helps bring our
attention to the present moment and can
help us to feel grounded.

Take a moment to 'read' a tree by
looking closely at its bark, branches,
leaves, and the life around it.

What stories might it tell?





Eucalyptus

Common flora and fauna

of Cranbourne Gardens



Tiger Snake

Southern Brown Bandicoot



Billy Buttons



Banksia

Superb Fairy Wren



Everlasting
Daisies

Wombat



Xanthorrhoea



Fungi



Raven



Swamp Wallaby



Native Grasses

*Once you're finished with
this booklet we encourage you
to gift it to another person.*

Thanks for taking the time to slow down
and explore Cranbourne Gardens.
We hope it has helped you to connect
with the natural world.

What are you inspired to do in nature now?

For more information on the theory behind
these experiences, visit
www.rbg.vic.gov.au/learn

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