

Top Ten



Join our volunteer guides for a free 1 hour walk, departing from the Information Booth outside the Information Booth at 10:30 am everyday (except Christmas Day, Boxing Day, Easter Friday) and 1pm Monday to Friday.

If you'd rather enjoy the Garden at your own pace, here's our Top Ten to tick off:

1. Macquarie Culvert and Wall

In spring and summer – the starting point of the Botanic Garden is Mrs Macquaries road, containing Australia's oldest bridge and the wall completed in 1818 to separate the new Botanic Garden from the Governor's Domain. On the harbour side of the wall is our Tropical Horticultural garden, featuring a dazzling array of tropical flowers and foliage at its best during the summer and autumn. On the other side of the wall, from late July to mid October, the Spring Walk first planted in 1855, assaults the senses with the scent and colour of flowering peaches, wisteria and thousands of tulips.

2. Wollemi pine (*Wollemia nobilis*)

This is the closest you will get to seeing a dinosaur in the centre of Sydney. This remarkable tree discovered in 1994, by National Parks Ranger David Noble, ignited scientific and public interest around the world.

A type of southern hemisphere conifer that was once common on the ancient supercontinent Gondwana it was known only from the fossil record until Noble's chance discovery. Now available for sale in nurseries around the world a portion of all sales goes to supporting scientific research into conserving threatened species.

3. Cadi Jam Ora – First Encounters

You are on Cadigal land, this land known to indigenous people as Cadi was the first land cleared on the continent by Europeans who arrived in 1788 to establish a farm and cultivate grains to sustain over 1,000 new arrivals. Learn about Sydney's Aboriginal history along the 50 metre storyline and explore the differences between the plants brought by the First Fleet and the indigenous plants growing in Cadi before settlement. Find out how these two different cultures interacted with each other and with the plants both alien and familiar to them.

4. Glasshouse *Latitude 23* and Fernery

Enter our 1885 glasshouse to see orchids, hoyas and begonias flowering amongst abundant tropical foliage plants. Emerge from the tropical heat and cool down in the fernery displaying over 200 species of these ancient shade loving plants in a walled garden made from stone originally worked by convict labour.

5. *Agathis robusta* and Palm Grove.

Exit the Fernery and enter our Palm Grove where you will find over 300 species of palms, many rare in the wild planted amongst some of the oldest trees in our Garden, many of which are Australian rainforest trees collected by the Garden's early directors and planted in the 1820s. You will also find the tallest tree in the Garden, a Kauri pine (*Agathis robusta*), an Australian conifer from Queensland planted in 1853.

6. The Ponds

Follow the creek downhill past the restaurant and café to its end point in our pond network. The Lotus Pond adjoining our Oriental Garden, displays these amazing plants (*Nelumbo nucifera*) in all their glory from late December to mid- March. This freshwater pond gives way to our tidal pond, the main pond closer to the harbour. You will see local bird life such as; the Australian White Ibis, Pied Cormorant and Dusky Moorhen. Peer into the pond to see eels and nearby read about their remarkable migration from New Caledonia to the east coast of Australia.

7. Bottle Tree (*Brachychiton rupestris*)

Walk past the large sandstone, Choragic monument of Lysicrates, enjoy the surrounding flower beds then stop and ponder the remarkable swollen trunk of our oldest and grandest bottle tree. Native to northern parts of Australia, its swollen trunk stores water during periods of drought.

8. Childrens Fig (*Ficus macrophylla f. macrophylla*) and Lord Howe Island fig (*Ficus macrophylla f. columnaris*)

Face the harbour and turn left to promenade to these two remarkable Australian fig trees. Known as the children's fig because of its popularity with adventurous children, this tree is now fenced to preserve it for the future. One of the most popular trees in our Garden and the Domain, with over 150 individuals this species grows as a strangler in rainforests and is pollinated by a small wasp. Adjacent is the unique form from Lord Howe Island, which forms impressive stands of single trees with curtains of columnar roots.

9. Wurrungwuri sculpture by Chris Booth

As you walk towards the opera house look up the hill on your left to see this imposing sculpture surrounded by Australian native plants. Consisting of two parts, one made of 260 sandstone blocks in wave formation and cascading towards Sydney Harbour. The other part is a monolith built from 16,000 threaded quartz pebbles and decorated with a pattern from a rare Aboriginal shield - the "Sydney shield" - after obtaining permission from Aboriginal elder Allen Madden on behalf of the Cadigal people.

10. Happy Birthday and Australian Rockery

Built for the Sydney Olympics in 2000, this large rockery features a range of iconic Australian plants including the Gynea lily (*Doryanthes excelsa*) and Grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea spp.*). Nearby, to celebrate our 200th birthday in 2016 is a plant based, corten steel sculpture and associated bedding display announcing to the world, or at least passing ferries and boats that you are in the oldest Botanic Garden in the country.



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ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN SYDNEY
Mrs Macquaries Road Sydney NSW 2000
Australia
Opening hours