

DECEMBER/JANUARY 2020/21 WALK FROM THE LOWER CAR PARK



To help keep visitors keep COVID-19 safe we have decided that, rather than supply a paper copy of the walk, there is a downloadable version on our website (<https://www.friendsbgadelaide.com/guided-walks>) or a copy in the Noticeboard at the Garden that may be photographed to take with you.

In summer there is no better place to visit than the cool and shady Fern Gully, reached by a stroll along the lower road to the left of the main lake and taking the sealed road to the left at the first corner, past the small pond. On the way up to Fern Gully, on the left ***Eleocarpus reticulatus***, or **blueberry ash (A)**, endemic to the eastern States, has delicate pale pink flowers which the guides think look like fringed ballerina skirts. Pause at the next small pond and listen to the gurgling water and maybe the serenading of the frogs. By the information sign, glance to your left across into New Zealand Gully where the bright scarlet flowers of **Pohutukawa or NZ Christmas bush, *Metrosideros* sp.** are eye-catching.

From the lush growth and tall tree ferns you may be surprised that this area, included in landscape architect, Allan Correy's 1960s original Master Plan, was not developed until after the Ash Wednesday bushfires that ravaged the garden in 1983.



Take the path to the right. At your feet by the pond edge is a **maidenhair fern, *Adiantum venustum*** while a few steps further is a small **walking stick palm, *Linospadix monostachya* (B)**, often referred to as Harry Lauder's walking stick. Many thousands were harvested during and after the First World War for use by injured servicemen. On this specimen there are both old and new flower spikes emerging from a long, dark brown sheath.

Follow the steps up the path taking care as the steps are irregular and very steep. At the junction is a **NZ man fern, *Cyathea medullaris* (C)** with black stems with distinct white dashes. Also note the new unrolling fronds – the process is called 'circinnate vernation'.

Continue to the left, keeping the gully on your left, where you will find a collection of plants which had their origins in the ancient supercontinent Gondwana: again **blueberry ash, *Eleocarpus reticulatus***, with flowers and fruit; **black wattle, *Callicoma serratifolia*** with serrated leaf edges and pom-pom flowers; an **old man banksia, *Banksia serrata*** with popcorn-like bark and old cones; and **forest oak, *Allocasuarina torulosa* (D)** with corky bark.



A little further on the right is a small **rasp fern, *Doodia cordata* (E)** showing red new growth. This fern is native to Australia and New Zealand.

On the hillside in this area are several **Wollemi pines, *Wollemia nobilis*** doing well in their favoured situation. Also on the right with its huge leaves overhanging the path is an **Australian fan palm, *Livistonia australis* (F)** - be careful of thorns on the stems

Up further on the left are both plain and crested forms of the **male fern, *Dryopteris***. Tucked in behind them is the small tree fern, ***Cyathea atrox*** from New Guinea.

Cross the road and continue up the hill, enjoying the greenery of many ferns, until reaching the small path to the left, overhung on both sides with the spring growth of the **royal fern, *Osmunda regalis* (G)**, with the brown spikes of spore bodies at the ends of the fronds, giving it another common name of "flowering fern".



You may already know that ferns do not flower and are distinguished from flowering plants by the fact that their method of reproduction is by spores not by seeds, which are the result of pollinated flowers. Many ferns have their spore cases clustered on the underside of their fronds, some with and some without a flap of tissue which protects them during development. When the spores are ripe, the spore cases expand and explode, pushing aside the protective flap in the process and expelling the spores

to drift on air currents before settling and germinating at a new site.

This is a wonderful area to stroll, especially on a hot day, when you may be cooled by the very efficient watering system. But never mind you will soon dry off. When you regain the road, paths lead off to the right through more ferns and leading to New Zealand Gully where there are good views across Fern Gully taking in the tall trunks of the mature tree ferns.



This leaflet has been prepared by the Garden Guides and funded by the Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide Inc.

For information about the Friends and/or guided walks, please telephone 8222 9367
www.friendsbgadelaide.com