

INTRODUCTION

The Hunter Region Botanic Gardens was established in 1986. It has been developed and maintained substantially by a non-profit company of volunteers. The Gardens cover 140 ha, much of which is natural bush, mainly Blackbutt (*Eucalyptus pilularis*) and Smooth Barked Apple (*Angophora costata*) forest. Over 2000 different species of plants have been planted in the developed areas. Most of the plants are Australian natives.

This tour will give you a glimpse of the extent of our Gardens

THE PROTEA GARDEN

This garden was established in 1994. *Protea* are a native to South Africa. They are members of the Proteaceae family, which originated on the Gondwana super continent, when Australia was joined to South Africa, South America and India.

After the break up of Gondwana, *Proteas* evolved in South Africa, while many genera, including *Banksia*, *Grevillea* and *Telopea* (Waratah), evolved in Australia. The showy parts of *Protea* flowers are not petals but modified leaves (bracts).



RARE & ENDANGERED SPECIES

The Hunter Region Botanic Gardens cultivates many rare and endangered plants. A major threat to the Australian flora is land clearing. Botanic gardens assist plant conservation by undertaking research and growing and conserving the seeds of rare and endangered plants. You can help conserve flora and the animals they support by

supporting the Botanic Gardens; maintaining areas of native bush on private land; & not collecting or damaging plants from natural areas.

THE GREVILLIA GARDEN

The Grevillea garden was started in 1989, and now over 300 species are in this garden. In Australia, there are approximately 350 species of *Grevillea*. Grevilleas are also in the Proteaceae family. They are found mostly in Australia, with a few species in Indonesia, New Guinea and New Caledonia. Grevilleas produce large amounts of nectar & attract many honey eating birds to the gardens.



LAMIACEAE GARDEN

The Lamiaceae (mint) family is a large plant family occurring world wide. It includes many culinary herbs such as mint, lemon balm, lavender, rosemary and thyme. In this garden, Australian members of the mint family, mostly in the genus *Prostanthera*, are grown. The Australian "native mints" are also highly scented.



RUTACEAE BED

This small bed contains Australian members of the "citrus family", such as *Boronia*, *Correa*, *Crowea* and *Eriostemon*. These showy plants all have highly scented leaves. Opposite the Rutaceae bed is a small garden of Hunter Region *Hibbertia* plants with bright yellow flowers in front of a bed of native plants from other areas in Australia.



HAKEA AND BANKSIA BEDS

These beds contain many representatives of the Proteaceae genera *Hakea* and *Banksia* mainly from the Hunter Region and Western Australia, as well as from some other areas of Australia.



PLANTS OF THE HUNTER REGION

This area contains a small selection of the 2000 or so plants which occur in the Hunter Region. The "Wildflower Walk" (part of the Blue Walk) in the Conservation area, contains many of the plants which occur naturally in the Gardens.

LILIACEAE BED

The large Gynea Lilies (*Doryanthes* sp.) and Crinum Lilies growing here are a few local representatives of this very large world wide family.

ACACIA GARDEN

Acacias (wattles) are found in the tropical parts of the Americas, Africa and India. Australia has over 1000 species. All wattles have a bean-like seed pod and globular or spike-like flowers. The flowers produce no nectar but are never the less an important food source for many native animals.



The Acacia loop is a short walk around the Acacia garden and most of the acacias within the loop occur in the Hunter Region. There is also a small area devoted to the Grass Tree (*Xanthorrhoea* species). From within the Acacia garden a short detour leads to the Wetland viewing area.

PARRY PLACE

This attractive garden was developed by members of the Newcastle Branch of the Society for Growing Australian Plants. It features native plants that are available from nurseries and are suitable for the home garden

SUCCULENT GARDEN

This garden features cacti and succulents from South Africa and the Americas. Their natural habitat is arid environments, so the plants are “water-misers”, with adaptations which help them store as much water as possible for the dry seasons. During rain plants store water in swollen cells. The ribs on many cacti stems channel the rain down to the roots, and also allow the plant to swell without bursting. Spines also collect dew which is then channeled down to the roots, and they protect them from browsing animals.



GUNDABOOKA TRAIL

This circuit features some of the local plants used by Aborigines for food, medicine and fibre. The Kooris in this area are the Worimi people who live throughout Port Stephens and north to Seal Rocks.

RAINFOREST AREA

In this area are a large number of mostly NSW rainforest trees and shrubs. Whilst the flowers of these plants are usually small, they frequently have attractive foliage, especially when young, and bright fruits or seeds.

FERN GULLY

This delightful area contains a number of interesting Australasian ferns and tree ferns as well as many epiphytic orchids. The ferns with the very large fronds are *Angiopteris evecta*.



PALM GARDEN

An extensive collection of Australasian palms makes this a pleasant area to walk through. The main palms are species of *Livistona* and *Archontophoenix*



BOTANIC WALK ROUTE:

Clockwise route. From the Visitor's Centre, head towards the Gardens Map sign near the Plant Stall. Follow the Red Walk left to the Protea garden. Proceed through the Grevillea, Rutaceae and Banksia gardens to the Acacia garden. Just inside the Acacia garden is a short detour to the Wetland viewing platform. Continue along the main path into the Acacia garden and after completing the Acacia loop walk and the Grass Tree loop, return to Parry Place on the left, then through the Succulent garden to the Arid garden. After leaving the Arid garden area, turn left and continue to the Gundabooka Trail where the loop trail may be completed.

You may return directly to the Visitors Centre from here. This 1st part of the Walk is about 1.1 km long and takes about 1 hour.

After leaving the Gundabooka area the path to the Rainforest area, Fern Gully and Palm Garden is on the left. Note: this section is about 0.7 km and take about 1/2 hour, it is also unsuitable for wheelchairs. After leaving Fern Gully return along the lower path to the Visitors Centre via the Palm garden.

Hunter Region BOTANIC GARDENS

10c

THE BOTANIC WALK

Distance: 1 - 1.8km
Duration: 1 - 1.5 hours



Proudly Sponsored by
Newcastle City Council



Open 7 Days, 9am to 4pm
(Closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day & Good Friday)