

Garden Highlights, August 2016

This month we celebrate the winter evergreen trees.

1. Most **Conifers** are evergreen, despite some living in the coldest parts of the world. The most northerly trees are Dahurian Larch *Larix gmelinii*, in the pine family, growing eastern Siberia. These gardens have many Conifers, both Australian and introduced. The surrounding park (Eastern Park) is mainly a **Pinetum**, growing many additional species of conifers (Pines, Cedars, Yews, Cypresses, Junipers, etc.). The northern conifer forests are the world's largest forests and the largest trees are the Conifers the **Giant Redwood** *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, of which there are 2 examples in these gardens. There is a sapling planted in 2002 and a tree planted 143 years ago, about 25 m tall and with a girth of more than 6 m, the probably the largest tree in these gardens.

2. In South Eastern Australia most indigenous trees are evergreen. This does not mean they don't shed their leaves. Many drop their leaves to coincide with the onset of hot dry weather in December and slow their growth until the arrival of winter rain. In the moist forests along the coast to the north many trees are also evergreen. An example is the **Black Bean** *Castanospermum australe*, whose large bean pods are hanging from the branches.

3. All **Palms** are evergreen. Most are from warm rainforest with a few living in dry environments with adequate underground water. There is only one New Zealand palm, despite there being 38 species in New Caledonia, the northern part of the submerged continent Zealandia. Similarly, Australia has few species of palm for its area, with only about 60. The southernmost palm is New Zealand's **Feather Duster Palm or Nikau** *Rhopalostylis sapida*, which reaches 44°S on the Chatham Islands where an oceanic climate prevails.

4. Many **Figs** grow in tropical and sub-tropical moist forests and so are evergreen. However, there are deciduous figs that lose their leaves, including the Common Fig *Ficus carica*, that we eat. Of the 11 species of figs (plus some varieties) in these gardens, all are evergreen and the **Moreton Bay Fig** *Ficus macrophylla* is the largest. Why is there a bridge or board-walk around part of this large fig? Figs are the only plant with flowers growing inside a container - the fig 'fruit'.

What's on in August 2016

Discovery Walk: 'Spice up your day', Sunday 14 August 2:00 pm.

Gold coin donation.

Discovery Table, Sunday 21 August 1:00 - 3:00 pm.

The **Friends' Nursery** is open on Wednesdays 9:30 am - 12:30 pm.

Conifers, Palms, Morton Bay Fig and Black Bean may be available.

Free Guided Walks, each Sunday 2:00 pm.

Wednesday walks resume in September.

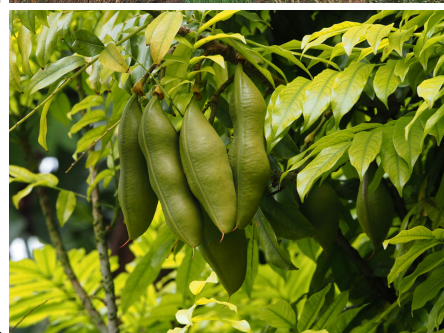
The **Curiosity Cabinet** has a Japanese Tea Garden display.

The Tea House is open every day.

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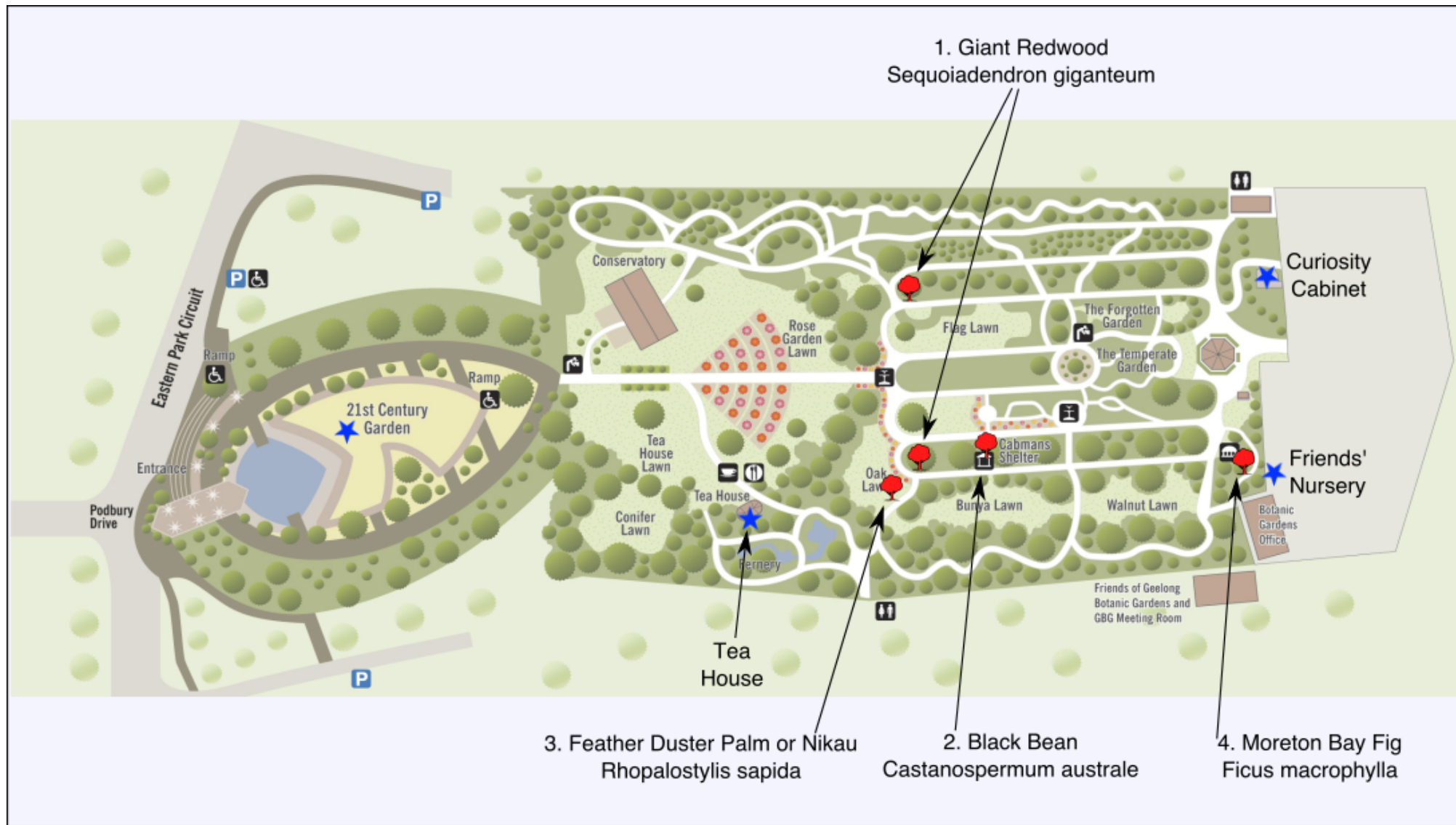


4.



Over page: Map showing these plants

Geelong Botanic Gardens Map



This information was developed by the Volunteer Guides
Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens

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