



Must see

Wildflower Meadow next to the Herb Garden

January

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN SYDNEY

Begin the new year discovering weird and wonderful plants in shady nooks. Scan the QR code to learn more about our plants and garden on a Daily Guided walk.



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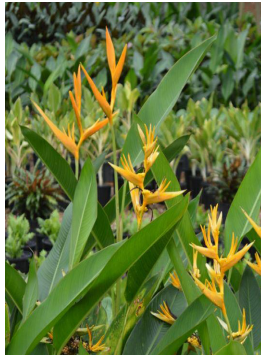
1. *Aleurites rockinghamensis* - Candlenut

Look up into the canopy of this beautiful rainforest tree native to tropical Queensland, and you will see globular fruit dangling from the branches. Hard-shelled brown fruit contain soft white kernels that can be burned as candles because of their extremely high oil content (35-50%), giving the tree its common name. Seeds are toxic unless properly prepared. Yirrgandyji and Djabugay Aboriginal people of North Queensland call this tree Nga-pa-la and use it for food, medicine and tool-making. **Family: Euphorbiaceae**



2. *Heliconia* varieties - Lobster Claws

Coiled inside colourful waxy bracts are the true flowers of *Heliconia*. In the wild, these bracts attract hummingbirds whose beaks reach into the tiny flowers enabling pollination. Linnaeus named the genus after Mount Helicon, sacred to the Muses of Greek Mythology. There are nearly 200 *Heliconia* species, native to tropical America and South Pacific Islands. Next to our creek, discover *H. subulata* from Central America with yellow-tipped, red bracts and *H. 'Golden Torch'* (pictured). **Family: Heliconiaceae**



3. *Wallichia oblongifolia* - mi hua wa li zong

Don't miss the flowering of this elegant, rarely cultivated palm. Native to humid forests from the Himalayas to China, this clumping palm has spirally arranged leaves. Each pinnate leaf bears rows of oblong leaflets resembling fishtails! Locally, leaves are used for thatching and making brooms. Flowers emerge wrapped in huge protective, dark chocolate-coloured bracts. This monoecious palm produces separate male and female flowers on the same plant, followed by greenish-brown fruit (drupes) with elliptical seeds. **Family: Arecaceae**



4. *Nymphaea* varieties - Water Lilies

With their attractive pad-like leaves and showy, often scented flowers, it is no wonder that water lilies were named after the beautiful nymphs of Greek mythology. Water Lilies also belong to an early evolutionary lineage of flowering plants. Today there are 65 species of *Nymphaea* native to temperate and tropical biomes, including 12 Australian species. *Nymphaea violacea*, endemic to northern Australia and New Guinea, is a staple food for Aboriginal cultural groups of northern Australia. (*Nymphaea odorata* pictured) **Family: Nymphaeaceae**



6. *Anthurium* species and cultivars

Look out for spectacular Anthuriums in our Tropical Garden. Native to the tropical Americas, there are over 1300 *Anthurium* species, the largest genus in the aroid family. Like other aroids they have a distinctive, spike-like inflorescence called a spadix, bearing small flowers, surrounded by a leaf-like bract (spathe). Look out for *Anthurium luteynii*, Bird's Nest Anthurium, from Panama with a purple spadix. Find more Anthuriums at the Alchemy of a Rainforest exhibition in the Calyx. **Family: Araceae**



7. *Portea petropolitana* var. *extensa*

This gorgeous bromeliad is one of eight species in the genus *Portea*, all native to Brazil's Atlantic coast. In their natural habitat they grow on rocks or sandy soil. These tough plants are admired for their striking candelabra-shaped inflorescence decked in lavender flowers that emerges from a rosette of lime green leaves. This bromeliad flowers and bears fruit (inedible purple berries), only once during its life (monocarpic). After seeding the leafy rosette dies, but new plants arise from 'pups' growing at the plant's base, and from seeds. **Family: Bromeliaceae**



8. *Bambusa vulgaris* var. *vittata* - Bamboo

Enter our circle of giant bamboo and listen for the haunting sound of creaking culms and rustling leaves! Bamboo is a giant, flowering grass, and its hollow woody stems are called culms. Bamboo is the fastest growing land plant in the world. *Bambusa vulgaris* is a clumping species, 10-20 metres tall, native to Yunnan China and Indo-China. It has been cultivated for over 7000 years by the Chinese for food, medicine and shelter. Flowering is a rare, 'gregarious' event - plants growing together flower simultaneously, produce seeds, then die. **Family: Poaceae**



5. PLANT OF THE MONTH

Tabernaemontana cerifera Paper Gardenia

This attractive tree from New Caledonia is from the Frangipani family. Their white star shaped flowers appear in summer with a wonderful gardenia-like fragrance. The petals are fused at the base making a long thin nectar tube and the fragrance is stronger at night suggesting they are moth pollinated. Green fruit are boat-shaped and occur in pairs. Like other plants from this family, it has poisonous white sap. **Family: Apocynaceae**

