

Alfred Nicholas Gardens

A Timeless Romantic Garden

Alfred Nicholas Gardens are the original gardens of the 'Burnham Beeches' estate. The gardens are renowned for their extensive water features including a quaint boathouse, the unusual Blackfish Pond and a picturesque lake which is filled by two waterfalls.

Garden History

Land in the area was first opened for selection in 1895. Alfred Nicholas purchased two ten acre selections in 1929 to build his home and then proceeded to buy surrounding land to add to his estate. The property was soon named 'Burnham Beeches' after the original Burnham Beeches in Slough, England.

Alfred Nicholas and his brother George developed the 'Aspro', aspirin pain killer. It was originally a German discovery whose supply halted during World War I. George, a chemist, re-discovered the formula and after the Australian Government awarded the patent, the Nicholas fortune began.

Mr Nicholas travelled to England where he met Mr Percival Trevaskis who was employed by the Bureau of Entomology at Kew Gardens. Percy was offered the position of head gardener at Burnham Beeches.

After arriving in Australia Percy set about designing the garden. The plan included rockeries, an artificial waterfall and ornamental lake as the main features.

Mr Nicholas travelled through the streets of Melbourne in search of established trees that could be purchased for his property. A five wheel Scammel truck was imported from England especially for the task. The first tree to be loaded onto the truck was a sugar maple which was so heavy that it went through the bottom of the truck.

Sadly, Mr Nicholas passed away in 1933 before his garden creation was complete and the property soon began to decline. Mrs Nicholas stayed at Burnham Beeches until the outbreak of World War II. Mrs Nicholas resumed living at Burnham Beeches in 1950 and stayed until 1954. The property and the house was handed over to their company who converted it into a research laboratory.

In 1965 the Nicholas Company donated the gardens to the people of Victoria by way of the

local Shire Council. After seven years the council handed the garden over to the Victorian State Government. A number of government agencies have managed the garden since then. Parks Victoria currently manages the gardens, whilst Burnham Beeches is privately owned.

Garden Highlights

The many linking paths through the garden take you beneath the canopy of the awesome Mountain Ash trees, *Eucalyptus regnans*.

Much of the detailed plantings have been lost over past years but the structure of the garden remains and is emphasised by the many rock walls, waterfalls, ponds and the magnificent lake.

Parks Victoria is committed to restoring this garden to its former glory, including recent restoration of the lake which involved the rebuilding of the Blackfish Pond as well as repairs to rock walls and surrounding paths. This has dramatically improved the appearance of the area.

Seasonal Highlights

Summer

Hydrangeas, Fuschias and late flowering Rhododendrons.

Autumn

Foliage colour of Maples, Beeches and the famous butter lemon Ginkgos on the lake.

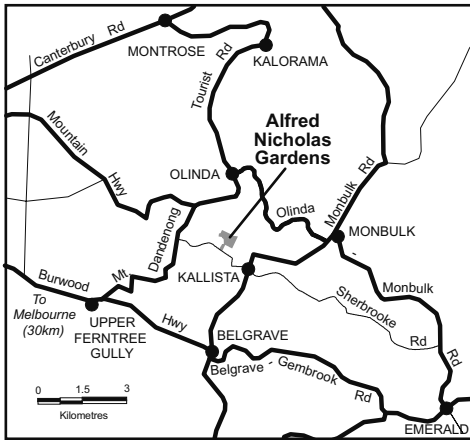
Winter

Camellias and early Rhododendrons.

Spring

Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Camellias and Kalmia.





A Lasting Gift

Leaving a bequest to these Dandenong Ranges Gardens in your will is a lasting way to help care for the gardens for the future. Your bequest is invested in the Dandenong Ranges Gardens Trust Fund and applied to areas of the gardens most in need of support.

For further information contact Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 1963.

Caring for the Garden

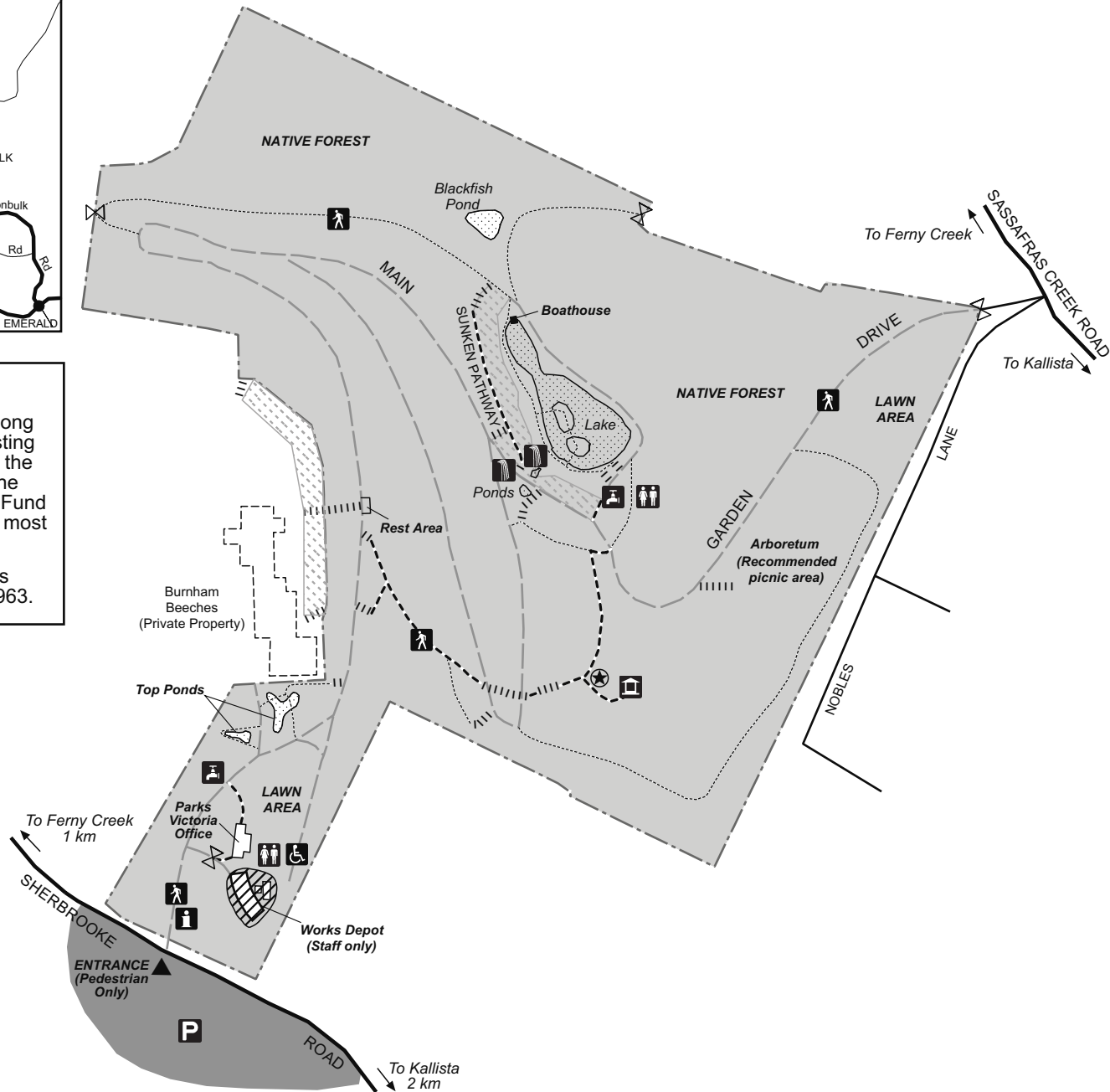
Help us look after the garden by remembering these guidelines:

Dogs must be controlled on a leash at all times

Take all rubbish home with you

Do not collect plant species – leave them for others to enjoy

Updated June 2002



Please return this garden note to the information shelter after use so it can be used by others. Thank you.

Alfred Nicholas Gardens

- Garden Area
- Rockery
- Water Body
- Staff Only
- Car Park
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Walking Track (Management Vehicles Only)
- Main Walking Path
- Secondary Walking Path
- Steps
- Toilets
- Park Information
- Drinking Fountain
- Gazebo
- Waterfall
- Walking Track
- Toilet for Disabled
- Sculpture
- Gate

