

THE AUSTRALIAN GARDEN

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS CRANBOURNE, VICTORIA



The Australian Garden is a source of natural environmental knowledge and also contains various demonstrations of sustainable practices for home gardeners. This relevance to everyday life will show visitors how the latest research and designs can help them to make their gardens more environmentally sustainable. Issues such as water conservation, native plant home gardens and “the future garden” are examined.

Other features include the Kid’s Backyard, which rejects the usual artificial “plastic” equipment and encourages children to use their imagination and explore using organic materials such as a red-gum timber Hortasaurus, a large animal made from salvaged timber.

The Australian Garden is also home to some stunning artworks. These include the Ephemeral Lake, which introduces the story of water in our vast and arid continent, and the Escarpment Wall, which is inspired by the red sandstone escarpments such as those found at Uluru and King’s Canyon. The huge 100m long Escarpment Wall Sculpture runs along the Rockpool Waterway and is made up of striking red-rusted weathering steel.

The use of steel and timber throughout the Australian Garden contributes to its earthy, natural feel. Galvanized steel was used to build the bridge that spans the water where the Rockpool Waterway ends. Galvanized steel is also used with timber to create a shelter for visitors either looking for a place to rest or sit and eat.

The Royal Botanic Gardens Board Victoria (RBGBV) plays a leading role in the conservation of plants and improving the understanding of plants. It does this through biodiversity research, conservation and education programs and the study of habitats. The RBGBV is responsible for the administration of two major gardens: 363 hectares of remnant bushland and wetland at Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne; and 38 hectares of heritage landscapes at Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

The education and visitor programs have recently been expanded with the opening of the first stage of the Australian Garden within the Cranbourne site. The Australian Garden will showcase much of the remarkable plant and animal life unique to the Australian environment.

The Australian Garden was designed by landscape architects, Taylor Cullity Lethlean, in conjunction with respected plant designer, Paul Thompson. It has won a number of design awards, with the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects jury saying in 1998 that the garden elevated, “...the notion of floral displays to those of whole ecosystems, underlying soil and water systems manifest and inspiring further exploration.”

The Australian Garden also seeks to explore the relationship between the living environment and our daily life. Humans have a significant impact on the Australian environment and this facility will offer a greater understanding of this interaction.



Galvanized steel has been a part of the rural environment in Australia for over 130 years. It was used for shelter, water collection and fencing. Anyone travelling through our continent will be familiar with the iconic visual and functional status of galvanized steel. It is appropriate that galvanized steel has been used in the Australian Garden in conjunction with other traditional and natural materials.

The Australia Garden is located in Cranbourne and is approximately a 50 min drive from Melbourne. It has a visitor centre, a Gardens Shop, and a café. Guided tours and education programs are also available to visitors.

The second stage is planned to commence in late 2006 and will cover 15 hectares. It is expected to take three years to design and construct.

Acknowledgments and further information:

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