



# **GREEN ESCAPES:** GARDENS OF THE YARRA VALLEY & DANDENONG RANGES

01: EDITION

**FIND  
YOUR  
SELF** | **MELBOURNE'S  
YARRA VALLEY AND  
DANDENONG RANGES**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY:

The gardens included are all part of the Indigenous cultural landscape of the Wurundjeri, Taungurung & Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation on the lands of the world's oldest living culture. Yarra Ranges Tourism respects the deep and continuing connection that these Traditional Owners have to these gardens and recognise their role in caring for Country.

This book is a celebration of their ancestral knowledge, expertise and ongoing care they've given to the land, waterways and wildlife. The tourism industry of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges pay our deepest respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

# REGION MAP:

CURATED TO ASSIST AND INFORM VISITORS WHILE INSPIRING VISITATION TO SOME OF OUR KEY GARDENS AND SURROUNDS.





## GARDENS:

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## ICONS



Dogs on lead



Lookout



Parking



Waterfall



Wildlife



BBQs



Cafe



Changing Places



Disability Access



Accommodation



Picnic Spot



Retail



Toilets



Walking

# HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

**THE YARRA VALLEY AND DANDENONG RANGES ARE NOT ONLY CELEBRATED FOR THEIR NATURAL BEAUTY BUT ALSO FOR THEIR CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL CONNECTION TO GARDENING, WHICH HAS SHAPED THEIR IDENTITY OVER CENTURIES.**

## INDIGENOUS ROOTS

The horticultural history of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges begins with the Wurundjeri, Taungurung and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation, the traditional custodians of the land. For thousands of years, they've practised sustainable land management and cultivated native plants for food, medicine, and tools. Their intimate knowledge of the local flora and practices contribute to a thriving ecosystem that continues to inspire modern sustainable gardening.

## EUROPEAN INFLUENCE AND EARLY SETTLEMENTS

European settlement in the mid-19th century brought significant changes to the landscape. The volcanic fertile soils and temperate climate of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges made them ideal for agriculture, viticulture, and ornamental horticulture. Settlers introduced exotic plant species and established sprawling gardens that reflected European traditions, blending them with the Australian environment.

This era also saw the establishment of public gardens and arboretums, which became focal points for community gatherings, hospitality and tourism.

## THE RISE OF ICONIC GARDENS

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Dandenong Ranges had become synonymous with ornamental gardens. Wealthy landowners and horticultural enthusiasts created grand estates with elaborate gardens that showcased diverse plant collections. Notable examples include the Alfred Nicholas Memorial Gardens and Cloudehill Garden, which exemplify formal garden design while celebrating the natural beauty of the Australian bush.

These gardens were designed not only for aesthetic appeal but also for educational and cultural enrichment. They provided spaces for recreation and inspiration, attracting visitors from Melbourne and beyond. The popularity of these gardens helped establish the Dandenong Ranges as a premier destination for cool climate garden tourism.

## THE WINE AND GARDEN CONNECTION

The Yarra Valley, renowned for its wine industry, also boasts a strong connection to horticulture. Vineyards and gardens coexist, with many wineries incorporating beautifully landscaped grounds to enhance the visitor experience. The synergy between viticulture and horticulture highlights the region's dedication to preserving its natural heritage while embracing tourism.

## MODERN SIGNIFICANCE

Today, the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges continue to celebrate their horticultural legacy through festivals, garden tours, and conservation efforts. Events such as Tesselaar KaBloom Festival of Flowers and open garden days attract enthusiasts eager to explore the area's botanical wonders. Conservation projects focus on preserving native flora and ensuring that the region's rich horticultural history endures for future generations.

# OUR COOL CLIMATE GARDENS:

**GARDENS IN THE YARRA VALLEY & DANDENONG RANGES ARE RENOWNED FOR THEIR UNIQUE BEAUTY, LUSH DIVERSITY, AND THE SEASONAL SPECTACLE THEY OFFER. THE COOLER TEMPERATURES, HIGHER ALTITUDES, AND AMPLE RAINFALL OF THE REGION CREATE IDEAL CONDITIONS FOR A VARIETY OF PLANT SPECIES AND FOSTER A THRIVING ECOSYSTEM FOR BOTH NATIVE AUSTRALIAN PLANTS AND EXOTIC SPECIES.**

One defining feature of these gardens is the way they change with the seasons. In spring, the gardens burst into life, showcasing vibrant blossoms and the fresh green of new growth. Rhododendrons, azaleas, and magnolias are common highlights, with their brilliant colours attracting both visitors and local wildlife. Summer brings dense foliage and a lush, verdant canopy, providing cool, shaded spaces that are particularly inviting. Autumn is one of the most spectacular times to visit when the maple, elm and oak leaves transform into warm hues of red, orange, and yellow, creating a breathtaking display of colour. Finally, winter showcases the intricate textures and forms of bare branches, mosses, and hardy evergreens, often dusted with frost in the early morning hours.

The cool climate of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges also supports rare and unusual plants, from giant tree ferns to delicate hellebores and graceful Japanese maples. This diversity attracts garden enthusiasts, botanists, and casual visitors alike, as they can experience plant varieties and species not commonly seen elsewhere in Australia.

Beyond botanical appeal, these gardens offer a serene escape into nature, ideal for reflection and relaxation. Visitors can wander through landscaped paths, enjoy the views, and immerse themselves in the sounds and scents of nature. Our beautiful and biodiverse gardens also play a role in conservation and environmental education, as many gardens in the area are committed to preserving native plants and showcasing sustainable gardening practices.

We invite you to explore our region in all seasons and discover why it's so special.



YARRA VALLEY, VICTORIA

# GARDENS:

BEFORE YOU VISIT: YOUR SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT.

OUR PARKS AND GARDENS ARE BEAUTIFUL PLACES TO VISIT THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, BUT IT'S ESSENTIAL TO BE MINDFUL OF THE FIRE DANGER RATINGS OR SEVERE WEATHER EVENTS BEFORE YOU ARRIVE.

These ratings will affect accessibility into the parks and gardens. In some cases of fire risk or severe weather, gardens may be closed for safety.

Newer gardens, such as the Chelsea Australia Native Garden at Olinda, include an integrated bushfire protection system, but for visitor safety, will still close on days of Extreme Fire Danger Rating or severe weather events.

Plants and flowers within the gardens are protected. Keep our gardens beautiful by leaving them for others to enjoy and always take your rubbish with you (if bins are not available).

Not all gardens are pet-suitable, some will allow for dogs on lead only. Assistance dogs are allowed and for gardens within national parks, permits may be required for assistance dogs.



# 01:

## ALFRED NICHOLAS MEMORIAL GARDEN

1A SHERBROOKE ROAD, SHERBROOKE

The original garden of the historic Burnham Beeches Estate, Alfred Nicholas Memorial Garden is incredibly picturesque. Named in honour of pharmaceutical businessman and philanthropist, Alfred Nicholas, an avid horticulturalist who established several gardens including Burnham Beeches in 1929.

Well photographed for its extensive water features and pathways that weave under a canopy of Mountain Ash trees, this garden offers something to enjoy in every season. Spring brings flowering cherries, rhododendrons, camelias and azaleas while Autumn sees a beautiful spectrum of colourful foliage and the famous golden ginkgos along the lake. The summer months see the native ferns, fuchsia, hydrangeas and orchids fill the garden with colour and even winter visitors will enjoy camellias.

Bring a picnic, take a scenic stroll down the sloped pathway to the lake where the iconic boathouse sits just waiting to be photographed. Enjoy the surrounding birdsong; here you'll find king parrots, rosellas, kookaburras and of course, ducks on the lake.

Alfred Nicholas Memorial Garden is managed and maintained by Parks Victoria.

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**WHEN:** Daily from 10am to 5pm, closed Christmas Day.  
**COST:** Free.



