



Rare trees

Three trees in the Portland Botanic Gardens are listed as rare or outstanding specimens by the National Trust – *Cordyline australis*, *Wigandia caracsana* and *Rhus viminalis*.

Activities

The Botanic Gardens are popular with tourists, artists and photographers, and used for educational and recreational activities, weddings and family gatherings. The gardens are linked by walking tracks to the Fawthrop Lagoon and the foreshore precinct.



Facilities

- BBQs, picnic tables and seating
- Public toilets
- Disability access and wheelchair friendly paths
- Dogs on leashes welcome
- Portland Cable Tram stop is located at the main entrance



Portland

Botanic Gardens



For more information or an accessible format of this publication, visit the Portland Visitor Information Centre.
Ph: 1800 035 567 • www.glenelg.vic.gov.au



Portland Botanic Gardens
Corner of Cliff & Glenelg Streets, Portland

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History

In 1850 an area of approximately 30 acres bounded by Glenelg Street, Bentinck Street and Salt Creek was set aside as a reserve for a botanical garden. A group of influential townsfolk including the Henty brothers met in 1853 to generate interest in establishing the gardens. On 4 February 1854 a public meeting was held and a committee formed. A government grant of £500 was secured to fence the reserve and plan for the layout of the gardens. The area was fenced, but the plan was still several years away.



In September 1857 the committee wrote to Ferdinand von Mueller, Curator of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens requesting advice on laying out of the gardens. Alexander Elliott was appointed to the task and is believed to have visited Portland later that year to mark out the paths. By June 1858 Council had appointed the first curator, William Allitt, and the gardens opened to the public in early 1859. Portland's Botanic Gardens are the second oldest in Victoria.



Layout and plantings

The gardens are reflective of early European designs of path systems and a diverse range of plants. The layout of the paths remains the original design. Early plantings included specimens gathered and propagated by William Allitt, collected from around Portland and district. The plants in the gardens are fine examples of how diverse plant species adapt to Portland's temperate and coastal conditions. The planting style in the gardens highlights 'the art of gardening'.



Curator's Cottage

The bluestone curator's cottage was constructed in two stages, with the first stage erected in 1858 and the second stage was built in 1885. The cottage not only housed the curator and his family, but also doubled as a shelter for visitors to the garden during periods of inclement weather. Over the years seven curators lived in the cottage, the last being Gilbert Pritchard in 1963. In 1965 the cottage was restored and became home to the Portland Historical Society collection. It opened to the public as a house museum.

Sports in the gardens

In 1868, as the sport was gaining popularity in Australia, a croquet lawn was laid out in the Portland Botanic Gardens. The clubhouse was constructed in 1912 and croquet continues to be played in the gardens. By the late 1870s tennis was introduced to the colonies and the first game was played in the Portland gardens around that time. This suggests that the Portland Botanic Gardens also accommodated one of the earliest public tennis courts. The tennis courts were relocated to the far eastern end in the 1920s.



Dahlias

Introduced by the first curator William Allitt, dahlias have been a highlight of the Portland Botanic Gardens since the early days. The existing dahlia beds were laid out in 1984-85 and between early February and late April create an impressive display. There are 1,350 dahlia plants, including over 180 varieties. The dahlia blooms are used in Portland's annual ANZAC day floral display, a stunning presentation that has been held in the Memorial Triangle in Cliff Street since the 1930s.



Annual flower display beds

Displays of annuals near the main entrance and the cottage are planted in spring and autumn with cool climate plants for a bold display over summer and winter.



Roses

The rose gardens were laid out around the croquet lawns in the mid-1980s. The display comprises over 120 varieties including hybrid teas, floribundas and standard weeping roses. The roses are best viewed from November to May.



Indigenous and native garden beds

The native garden beds include species that are indigenous to Glenelg Shire and native species that grow well in a cool climate. Developed in the late 1980s/early 1990s, this section is best viewed during the winter months.

