

# National Rhododendron Gardens

## Spring Spectacular

In spring the National Rhododendron Gardens hosts an astounding display of riotous colour. Beginning in August, the vibrant sunshine yellows of daffodils dance with the dignified blooms of camellias announcing the imminence of spring. Throughout September, amidst snowy drifts of flowering cherries, colour will consistently build to a crescendo in October and early November, when rhododendrons and azaleas combine to paint a flamboyant splash of gaudy colour across the Gardens in loud mauves, pinks, oranges and reds.

### Walking in the Gardens

While many visitors take their time and enjoy all of the constantly changing vistas of the gardens, others prefer to take shorter walks into specific areas.

Should you decide to walk the entire Gardens (a round trip of approximately 5km) you will encounter some steeper grades.

The friendly staff at the Gift Shop at the Main Entrance will be delighted to advise and direct you to areas of the Gardens that most interest you.

### Location and Climate

The 43 hectare Gardens are located at an elevation of 600 metres above sea level with soils that are mostly volcanic, mildly acid and free draining. Facing north-east and receiving an average rainfall of 1,200 mm a year, the Gardens provide ideal growing conditions for rhododendrons and the multitude of exotic plants from around the world.

### History

The National Rhododendron Gardens were established in 1961 by the Australian Rhododendron Society. It is with thanks to this remarkable group of volunteers that the Gardens have become what they are today. Parks Victoria has managed the Gardens since 1995, and welcomes an ongoing contribution by the many volunteers and Friends.

### Natural Beauty

The Gardens are endowed by the beauty of the surrounding natural environment. Tall Mountain Ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*) provide a magnificent vertical accent to the Gardens. Mountain Ash are the tallest flowering trees in the world.

Magnificent views overlook Silvan Reservoir, the Yarra Valley, Warburton Ranges and Mt Baw

Baw. Many species of birds and animals frequent the Gardens. The resident lyrebirds may occasionally be seen or heard.

### Rhododendrons

Rhododendrons are of the family Ericaceae. A diverse group, there are approximately 950 species of rhododendron that occur in the wild, from the tiniest prostrate alpine, to shrubs through to tall trees of 30 metres. The National Rhododendron Gardens collection has approximately 550 of these species.

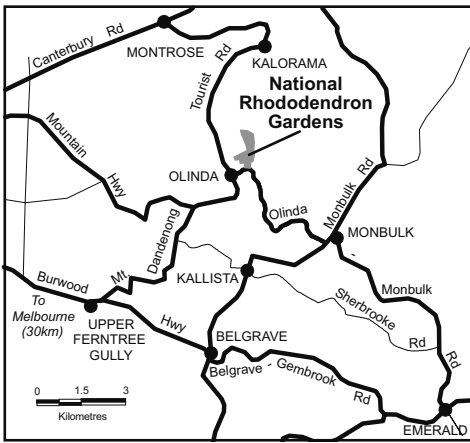
The distribution of rhododendrons extends predominantly throughout the northern hemisphere, with the majority of plants occurring in China, the Himalayas and North America. The Vireya Rhododendrons occur in tropical regions in a limited area of the Southern Hemisphere.

Rhododendrons are predominantly evergreen and occasionally deciduous, as in the Mollis and Ghent Azaleas.

The rhododendron flower is distinctive having petals that are joined at the base creating a bell or tubular shaped bloom, singular or in a cluster known as a truss. Flowering time is generally from June through to early December.

Of the 15,000 rhododendrons planted throughout the Gardens, approximately 7,500 are species (this includes the deciduous and Vireya Rhododendrons) the remaining 7,500 being a multitude of superb hybrids.





### National Rhododendron Gardens

- Garden Area
- Water Body
- Car Park
- Road
- Main Walking Trail
- Walking Track
- Disabled Access
- Parking for the disabled
- Park Information
- Toilets
- Gazebo
- Lookout
- Walking Track
- Station
- Gate

0 100 200 METRES

Cartography by Spatial Vision & Parks Victoria 2002 M7188

### Community Involvement

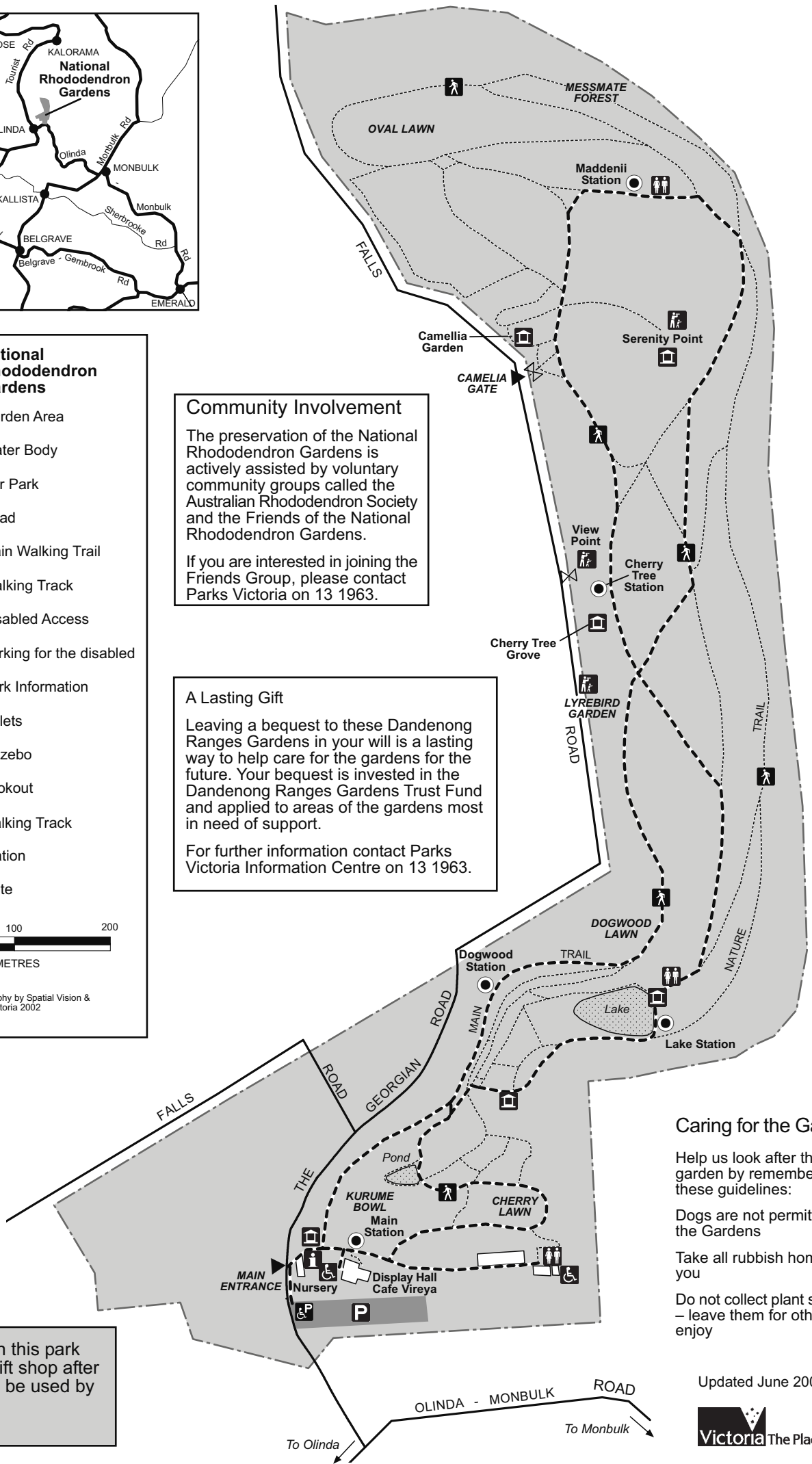
The preservation of the National Rhododendron Gardens is actively assisted by voluntary community groups called the Australian Rhododendron Society and the Friends of the National Rhododendron Gardens.

If you are interested in joining the Friends Group, please contact Parks Victoria on 13 1963.

### 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.



Please return this park note to the gift shop after use so it can be used by others.  
Thank you.

### Caring for the Garden

- Help us look after the garden by remembering these guidelines:
- Dogs are not permitted in the Gardens
- Take all rubbish home with you
- Do not collect plant species – leave them for others to enjoy