

# Explore stunning gardens in the Dandenong Ranges

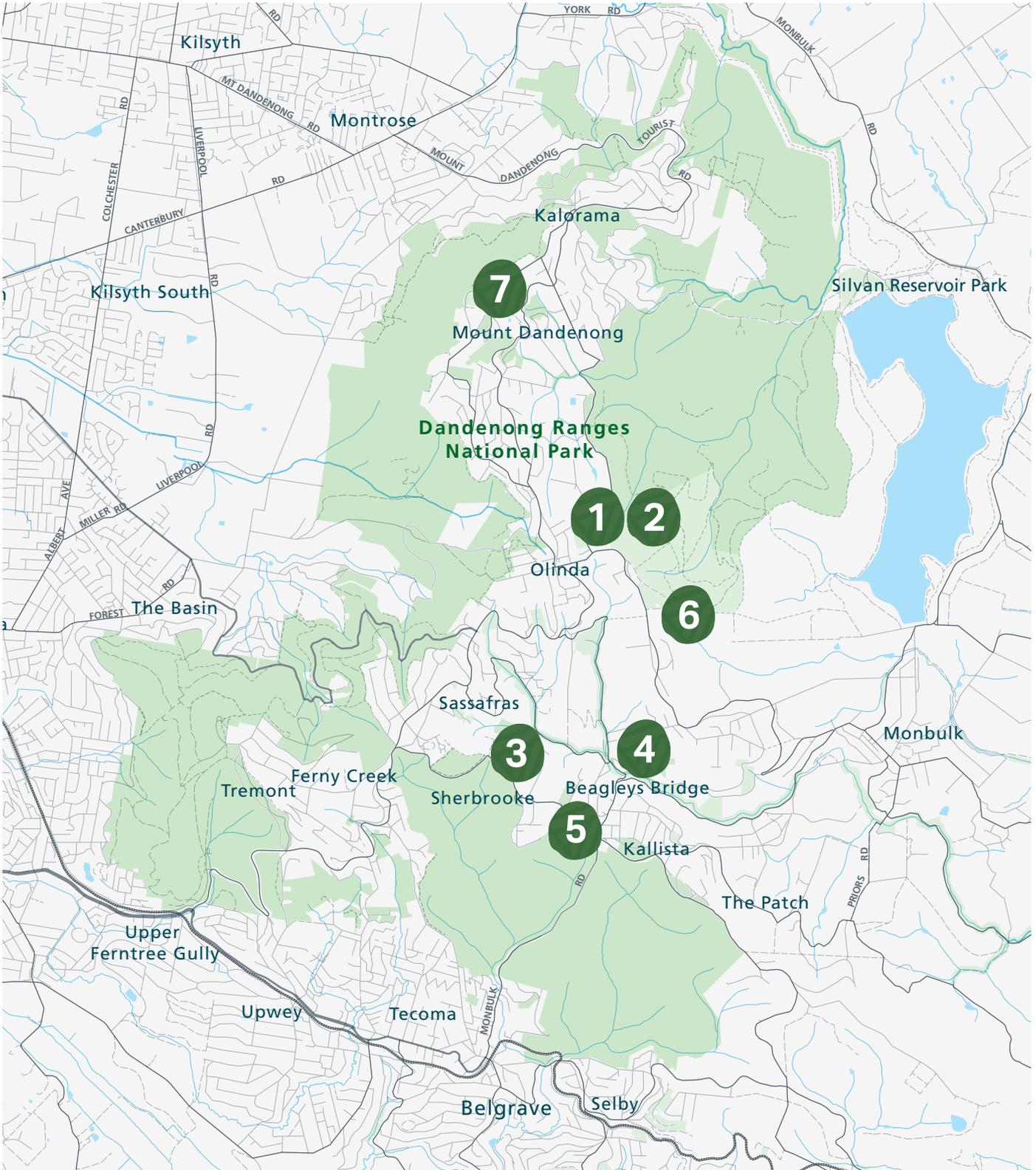
An itinerary guide and visitation tips, designed to help garden lovers maximise their trip.



Explore Victoria's diverse landscapes



# Dandenong Ranges Garden Itinerary



- Dandenong Ranges National Park
- Other park/reserve
- Waterbody

1. Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden
2. Chelsea Australian Garden at Olinda
3. Alfred Nicholas Memorial Garden
4. Pirianda Garden
5. George Tindale Memorial Garden
6. R.J. Hamer Arboretum
7. Mount Dandenong Arboretum

50 km east of Melbourne CBD

[www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)  
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The Dandenong Ranges, located on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country, are only a short trip from Melbourne – but you're in another world entirely. With a cool climate, high rainfall and rich volcanic soils, these low-level mountains are a plant lover's paradise. Indigenous ferns and eucalypts mix in with exotic fare from far-flung locales. It's a place of super-charged growing and striking seasonal interest.

Carefully plan your visit to these 7 gardens and parks, to benefit from their unique seasonality and beauty.

## 1 Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden

This spectacular landscape is Victoria's premier cool-climate botanic garden, and is a place of both high-end horticulture and boundary-pushing conservation.

As well as the garden's extensive plant displays – think 15,000 rhododendrons, 12,000 azaleas, 3000 camellias, 250,000 daffodils, banks of hydrangeas and a cherry blossom grove – a suite of plant conservation programs are conducted here.

The gardens were opened in 1960 and, while they were known as the National Rhododendron Gardens until 2017, the aim has always been to exhibit a wide palette of plants.

And that palette keeps getting wider, with a large-scale re-creation of the 'Australian Garden' that won best in show at the 2013 Chelsea Flower Show in London now a permanent display here.

Stroll around the 3.5km of paved walkway, including around the large ornamental lake, or join a tour on the garden's open-air bus, which operates year-round.

These gardens offer new delights in every season: in spring they are teeming with bulbs and blossoms, while in summer they bring refreshing respite, being about 5°C cooler than central Melbourne. In autumn the leaves of the majestic deciduous trees and shrubs are ablaze in fiery colours, while winter reveals intricate textures, distant views and atmospheric mists.

### Visitor Tip

A popular park, avoid the crowds by visiting on a weekday, or early on a weekend.

### Opening Hours

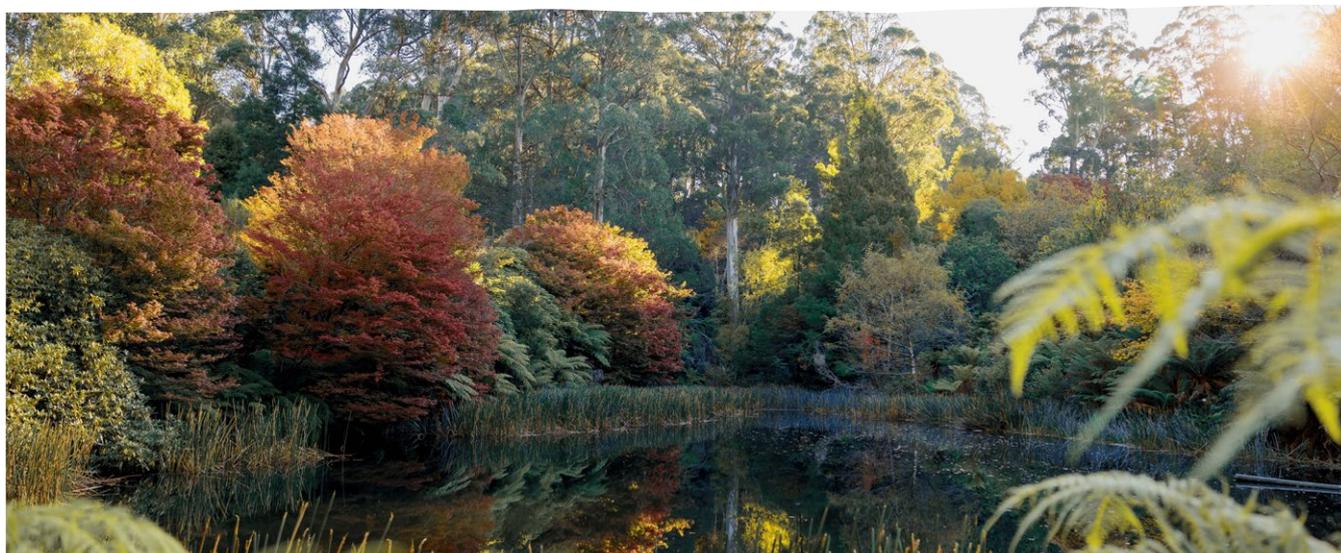
10am-4:30pm (gates locked 5pm), seven days except Christmas and days of total fire ban.

### Accessibility

The main 3.5km circuit path is a wide, sealed surface, with some sections quite steep. Unassisted wheelchair access is not recommended. Most of the minor paths are unsealed and wheelchair access is not recommended.

### Address

24 The Georgian Road, Olinda.





## 2 Chelsea Australian Garden at Olinda

The newest addition to the Dandenong Ranges gardens is a large-scale re-creation of the 'Australian Garden' that won best in show at the 2013 Chelsea Flower Show in London. Around 20 times bigger than the original garden, this head-turning space, created by designer Phillip Johnson, is now a permanent fixture within the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden.

A waterfall, billabong and boardwalk are just some of the elements in this spectacular garden that is arranged across multiple levels and contains several different microclimates, all the better to suit the 15,000 plants across 400 different species growing here.

Sustainability and water sensitive design are central to every aspect of this space that recreates vital habitat for birds, insects, reptiles and frogs. The waterfall is solar-powered, and the billabong is replenished with local storm water.

The landscape highlights the seasonal beauty of nature, with different plants in flower all year round.

### Visitor Tip

A popular park, avoid the crowds by visiting on a weekday, or early on a weekend.

### Opening Hours

10am-4:30pm (gates locked at 5pm), seven days except Christmas and days of total fire ban.

### Accessibility

The Chelsea Australian Garden at Olinda has DDA-compliant pathways included in the new garden. Entry paths and surrounding pathways and areas within the original Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden are not fully accessible, which should be taken into consideration when visiting.

### Address

24 The Georgian Road, Olinda (located within the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden).



## 3 Alfred Nicholas Memorial Garden

Established in the late 1920s and early 1930s by the pharmaceutical magnate Alfred Nicholas, this lavish garden contains theatrical water features, exotic trees, fine rock walls and extensive terraces.

Sloping paved paths lead visitors to a large ornamental lake that has a boathouse, bridges, islands and the air of a magical fantasy land. In autumn the water is carpeted in the buttery yellow leaves of the surrounding ginkgo trees, while a string of maples add fiery red and orange hues. Also look out for the dramatic rock walls that form the lake's backdrop.

There are more ginkgos, as well as a wide assortment of other trees in the nearby arboretum which is very popular with picnickers who set themselves up on the sunny lawn that surrounds the trees.

Although Nicholas' Art Moderne mansion is no longer part of the property, it is clearly visible and visitors can get a clear sense of how the house and garden were created to be one grand, seamlessly connected landscape.

### Visitor Tip

A tranquil garden in the morning and late afternoon. Visit on a winter morning for atmospheric mists.

### Opening Hours

Daylight hours, seven days except days of total fire ban.

### Accessibility

Sealed pathways at the top of the garden are accessible by wheelchair with assistance. Other sections of the garden include unsealed steep pathways that are not recommended for use by wheelchairs.

### Address

1A Sherbrooke Road, Sherbrooke.



## 4 Pirianda Garden

This delightful garden is leafy and tranquil, a perfect place for lazing on lawns and strolling around many northern hemisphere trees and shrubs not commonly seen in Australia. It also opens a window into domestic gardening in Australia in the 1960s. Largely the creation of Harvey and Gillian Ansell, this serene garden was their personal expression and they acquired many of its plants on annual overseas holidays.

It is set on a steep slope and, while some will opt to linger below the many trees in the upper reaches, you can also venture to the lower terraces where you will be rewarded with even more maples, birches, rhododendrons, viburnums, stewartias and magnolias.

As you descend you will see finely crafted terrace walls built from local stone and, in the lower part of the garden, the Ansell's modernist 1962 house.

The fern gully walk, also located at the bottom of the garden provides a silent, shady haven in summer, while the garden's three large Chinese Handkerchief trees come into their own in spring when the white tissue-like flowers, which are in fact bracts, flutter in the breeze.

### Visitor Tip

A tranquil garden year-round. Great for picnics in summer. The best place to see striking Autumn foliage without the crowds.

### Opening Hours

Daylight hours, seven days except days of total fire ban.

### Accessibility

The steep sealed pathways at the top end of the garden are accessible by wheelchair with assistance. Other sections of the garden include unsealed steep pathways that are not recommended for use by wheelchairs.

### Address

5-9 Hacketts Road, Olinda. **Note:** we recommend visitors access Hacketts Road via the Olinda-Monbulk Road only. Ignore GPS or Google Map directions that take you via Perrins Creek Road, as this access is extremely steep and only suitable for 4WD vehicles.



## 5 George Tindale Memorial Garden

A charming and exceptionally diverse garden that was fashioned by a pair of knowledgeable plant enthusiasts who went to great lengths to amass rare and unusual specimens that would thrive in this cool temperate climate.

George Tindale, a research scientist with the Victorian Department of Agriculture, and Ruth Tindale, an avid plant collector and gardener, were members of numerous horticultural societies and, in the late 1950s, forged ties with a network of other plant collectors in a bid to source as wide a range of hydrangeas, magnolias, rhododendrons, camellias, azaleas, fuchsias, bulbs and other suitable fare as possible.

Picnic on the lawns and take walks along the web of interweaving paved paths to soak up the colourful 20th century 'Gardenesque' mood. Thanks to the wide diversity of plants this garden is layered and dynamic and different four seasons of the year. Visitors will see new flowers on every visit, including bulbs in spring and autumn, hydrangeas in summer and hellebores in winter. There is also brilliant autumnal leaf colour.

### Visitor Tip

Rarely feels crowded. Visit in the late afternoon when the sunlight is more subdued and the brilliant colour of the flowers and foliage is at its sharpest.

### Opening Hours

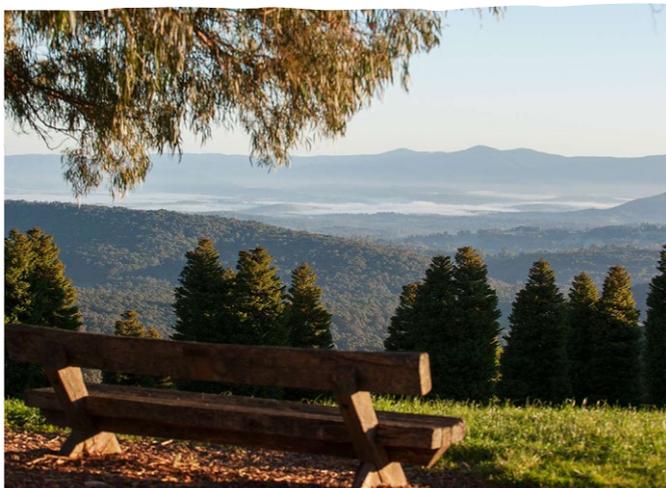
Daylight hours, seven days except days of total fire ban.

### Accessibility

Sealed pathways at the top end of the garden are accessible by wheelchair with assistance. Other sections of the garden include unsealed steep pathways that are not recommended for use by wheelchairs.

### Address

33 Sherbrooke Road, Sherbrooke.



## 6 R.J. Hamer Arboretum

Unlike a typical arboretum in which individual trees are displayed as isolated specimens, the R.J. Hamer Arboretum has been arranged like a forest. Most species are represented by no less than a half-hectare sweep of trees.

With more than 150 different species of natives and exotics, it is impossible not to be impressed by this atmospheric landscape that is great for exploring and a perfect place for picnics. While there are barbecue facilities and gazebos easily accessible from the car park, walk along any of the arboretum's meandering roads and tracks for more adventurous explorations all year round.

Named after Sir Rupert Hamer, the premier of Victoria from 1972 to 1981, most of the arboretum's plantings were undertaken in 1976 and 1978 with fire protection front of mind.

Laze below the majestic oaks, birches and willows in summer, watch their leaves unfurl in spring and turn fiery reds, oranges and purples in autumn. In winter the structure of this multi-layered and complex landscape is exposed, as well as the expansive views.

### Visitor Tip

Spectacular sunrises, perfect for a romantic stroll. For those wanting to explore its far reaches, be prepared for a walk.

### Opening Hours

Daylight hours, seven days except days of total fire ban.

### Accessibility

The arboretum includes steep unsealed tracks that that are not recommended for use by wheelchairs.

### Address

10 Chalet Road, Olinda.



## 7 Mount Dandenong Arboretum

Poised on the eastern slopes of the Dandenong Ranges, this understated but engaging arboretum was established between 1928 and 1931 with a special focus on the southern-hemisphere conifers. These statuesque trees were the height of fashion in the early 1900s and are finding new audiences today. But as well as monkey puzzles, kauris, hoop pines and more, the arboretum contains spectacular deciduous trees, grouped according to their species, such as unusual elms and oaks.

Enjoy sweeping views from the easily accessible picnicking area near the car park, or take a walk along one of the many informal paths to become immersed in the arboretum's loose, naturalistic feel. Rich and biodiverse, this 16-hectare landscape is alive with birds and butterflies, especially in spring and summer.

In autumn it is ablaze with brilliant leaf colour, while in winter, the views open up to Silvan and the surrounding areas of remnant forest.

### Visitor Tip

A tranquil garden year-round. Great to visit when the other gardens are crowded.

### Opening Hours

Daylight hours, seven days except days of total fire ban.

### Accessibility

The arboretum includes steep unsealed tracks that that are not recommended for use by wheelchairs.

### Address

65-67 Ridge Road, Mount Dandenong.