

BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS





Steeped in history

Developed on the back of the gold rush, the site was first reserved for a public garden in 1857 and was developed from 1858 on the old Police paddock site.

In 1858, a design competition was won by Messrs Wright and Armstrong. The inaugural Garden's Curator, George Longley, who trained in horticulture at Lowther Castle in England, was appointed to turn their vision into a reality.

The site was divided into three distinct sections – the Central Botanical Gardens and two areas of open parkland now known as the North and South Gardens.

The Botanical Gardens Nursery was established in 1859. Plants and seeds were received from the Royal Melbourne and Geelong Botanic Gardens.

In the 1860s, the principal tree planting began while in 1888 a maze was built in the North Gardens to the same design as one built in London's Hampton Court Palace. It was removed in 1959.

Planting of the Giant Redwood Avenue began in 1863 and the Fish Acclimatisation Society was established in the South Gardens. Construction of the Fernery had begun by the 1870s, with work on the Fernery continuing in stages until its completion in 1898.

Thomas Rooney and John Lingham followed Longley's stewardship of the Gardens in 1898, and English-trained Thomas Toop was the next successor to take charge. For the next 20 years, he led the continued growth of the Gardens and was succeeded by his apprentice Thomas Beaumont who spent 54 years as the Gardens' Curator. The Tom Beaumont Lawn was named in his honour.

From 1917-1959, the Gardens were home to The Ballarat Zoo. Prominent Ballarat resident Henry Ben Jahn left a bequest of 10,000 pounds to the City of Ballarat with the purpose of creating an animal menagerie. Remnants of the animal enclosures are still visible in the area of Zoo Drive.



Welcome to the Ballarat Botanical Gardens

The Ballarat Botanical Gardens is renowned as Australia's most attractive cool climate gardens.

Spread across 40 hectares of spectacular leafy gardens and avenues, the Gardens feature an exceptional collection of exotic conifer, deciduous and native trees.

Located opposite Lake Wendouree, the Gardens feature 52 mature trees listed on the National Trust Significant Trees Register and are also renowned for an outstanding collection of Begonias.

Home to two collections of Begonias, 240 tuberous and 300 non-tuberous varieties, both are registered with the Plants Trust Australia.

The Gardens has been growing tuberous Begonias since the late 1800s, with 140 of its tuberous Begonias imported from United Kingdom nursery Blackmore and Langdons. Many of those are now considered rare.

The Gardens is one of only a few that still plants large scale annual bedding displays. More than 10,000 annuals are planted to coincide with summer events and a further 10,000 annuals are planted for the spring display.





The Robert Clark Conservatory is home to seasonal displays year-round, featuring plants grown and maintained in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Nursery, including:

- *Hydrangeas, Fuchsias and Pelargoniums* each summer
- *Tuberous Begonia display* as part of the *Ballarat Begonia Festival* each autumn
- *Chrysanthemums* in May
- *Cyclamen, Cineraria and Primula* in winter, and
- *Schizanthus and spring bulbs* in spring.

The Gardens is also home to an extensive late 19th Century collection of marble statues, including the Thompson and Stoddart bequests.



The Ballarat Botanical Gardens welcomes thousands of visitors each year. It also attracts more than 60,000 for the three-day annual Ballarat Begonia Festival over the Labour Day weekend in March.

The Gardens also provide the venue for the City of Ballarat's much-loved Summer Sundays picnic and live music events each January.



Surrounding attractions

Lake Wendouree

Located in the heart of Ballarat, Lake Wendouree is one of Ballarat's most popular attractions. Walk, run or cycle the 6km Steve Moneghetti track. Watch the swans, ducks and yachts glide by, pack a picnic or prepare a barbecue and have some fun at the four play spaces on the lake foreshore. Visit one of the lake-side cafes or enjoy the picnic and BBQ facilities.

Australian Ex-Prisoners of War Memorial

Pause to recognise and honour the 36,000 Australians who became Prisoners of War during the wars of the 20th century. *(See map location 29)*

Ballarat Tramway Museum

Step back in time to explore the trams that rocked and rolled along the tracks of Ballarat streets from 1887 to 1971. The tram depot is home to collection of tramcars and memorabilia. Trams run every weekend, public holidays and during the Victorian school holidays. *(See map location 27)*

Murrup Laar

Visit the first public artwork project as part of the new Indigenous sculpture park at North Gardens, created by Ballarat artist Deanne Gilson. *(See map location 32)*


Ballarat Olympic Precinct


Ballarat hosted the rowing, canoeing and kayaking events for the 1956 Olympic Games at the lake. The monument celebrates Ballarat becoming an Olympic Games host city.

Ballarat Paralympic Sports Avenue

The only one of its kind in Australia, this avenue honours Ballarat athletes who have represented Australia at the Paralympic Games.

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