

# Alfred Nicholas Gardens



## Visitor Guide

Alfred Nicholas Gardens are the original gardens of the 'historic Burnham Beeches' estate. The Gardens are renowned for their extensive water features including a quaint boathouse, the unusual Blackfish Pond and a picturesque lake which is fed by two striking waterfalls.

### History

Land in the area was first opened for selection in 1895. Alfred Nicholas purchased two ten acre selections in 1929 to build his home and then proceeded to buy surrounding land to add to his estate. The property was soon named 'Burnham Beeches' after the original Burnham Beeches estate in Slough, England.

Alfred Nicholas and his brother George developed the 'Aspro', aspirin pain killer. This was originally a German discovery, but supply halted during World War 1. George Nicholas, a chemist, re-discovered the formula and after the Australian Government awarded the patent, the Nicholas fortune began.

Alfred Nicholas travelled to England where he met Mr Percival Trevaskis who was employed at Kew Gardens. Percy was offered the position of head gardener at Burnham Beeches.

After arriving in Australia, Percy set about designing the garden. The plan included rockeries, pools, waterfalls and an ornamental lake as the main features.

Mr Nicholas surveyed through the streets of Melbourne in search of established trees that could be purchased for his property. A five wheel Scammel truck was imported from England especially for the task. The first tree to be loaded onto the truck was a Sugar Maple which was so heavy that it went through the bottom of the truck tray.

Sadly, Alfred Nicholas passed away in 1933 before his garden creation was complete and the property soon began to decline. Isobel (Alfred's wife) remained at Burnham Beeches until the

outbreak of World War II. During the war the estate was used as a children's hospital. Mrs Nicholas resumed living at Burnham Beeches in 1950 and stayed until 1954 when the house and property were handed over to their company and converted to a research laboratory.

In 1965 the Nicholas institute donated the gardens to the people of Victoria by way of the Shire of Sherbrooke. Parks Victoria currently manages the garden whilst Burnham Beeches is privately owned.

### What to see and do

Linking paths through the garden take you beneath the canopy of the awesome Mountain Ash trees (*Eucalyptus regnans*).

Many of the detailed plantings have been lost over the years but the structure of the garden remains and is emphasised by the many rock walls, waterfalls, upper pools and the magnificent lake.

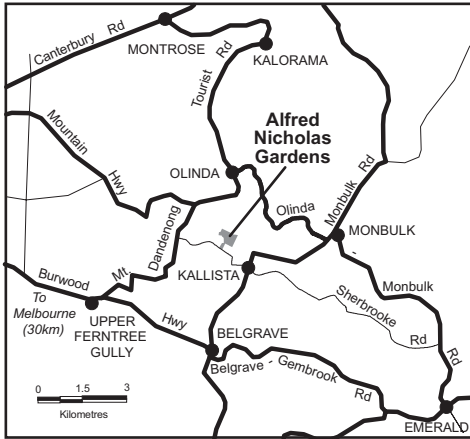
Parks Victoria has undertaken a range of restoration projects, including the rejuvenation of the lake in 1997 which involved the rebuilding of the Blackfish Pond as well as repairs to rock walls and surrounding paths. This has dramatically improved the appearance of the area which is very popular for picnics, quiet contemplation and family gatherings.

Another point of interest within the Garden is the intriguing sculpture by Mark Stoner located next to the gazebo.

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## Seasonal Highlights

### Spring

Rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias, kalmias and flowering cherries on the lake

### Summer

Hydrangeas, fuchsias, native ferns, rhododendrons and native terrestrial orchids

### Autumn

Foliage colour of maples, beech and the famous golden ginkgos on the lake.

### Winter

Camellias and early rhododendrons

## Caring for the Garden

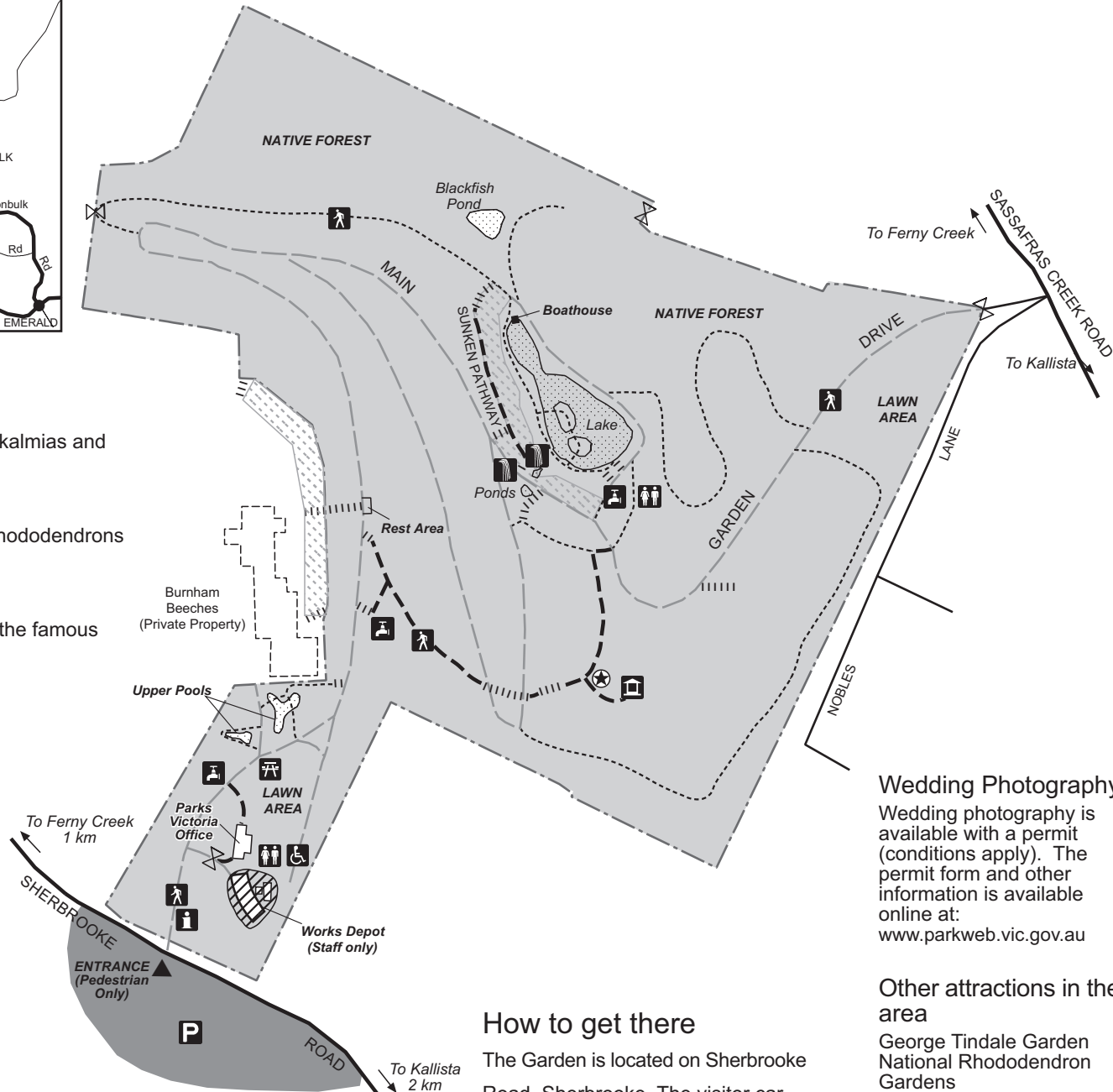
Help us look after the garden by remembering these guidelines:

Dogs must be controlled on a leash at all times

Take all rubbish home with you

Do not collect plant species – leave them for others to enjoy

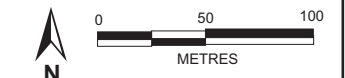
Updated May 2008



Please return this garden note to the information shelter after use so it can be used by others. Thank you.

## Alfred Nicholas Gardens

- Garden Area
- Rockery
- Water Body
- Staff Only
- Car Park
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Walking Track (Management Vehicles Only)
- Main Walking Path
- Secondary Walking Path
- Steps
- Toilets
- Park Information
- Drinking Fountain
- Gazebo
- Waterfall
- Walking Track
- Toilet for Disabled
- Sculpture
- Picnic table
- Gate



Cartography by Spatial Vision & Parks Victoria 2008  
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## Wedding Photography

Wedding photography is available with a permit (conditions apply). The permit form and other information is available online at: [www.parkweb.vic.gov.au](http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au)

## Other attractions in the area

George Tindale Garden  
National Rhododendron Gardens  
William Ricketts Sanctuary  
Dandenong Ranges National Park  
RJ Hamer Arboretum

## How to get there

The Garden is located on Sherbrooke Road, Sherbrooke. The visitor car park is opposite the main entrance. (Melways Ref. 75 G1).