

# Open Gardens Victoria

## Welcomes you to the garden of

### Astolat

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Astolat is located at 630 Riversdale Road Camberwell Victoria, built in circa 1882-1884. The name Astolat is derived from Tennyson's Idylls of the King.

Mr. Thomas Plumley Derham Junior, a solicitor, built the residence and lived there until the property was sold in 1895. Several short-term owner occupations followed until the Martyn family purchased the property in 1916. In 1985 the Tilley family bought the estate and carried out major restoration of the residence.

The residence is typical of late nineteenth century Italianate architecture of the upper middle class of Melbourne with its asymmetrical building form, return cast iron verandah, refined cement render detailing, intact fenestration, chimneys and slate roof.

The garden was developed soon after the completion of the mansion and is recognized as a typical nineteenth century suburban villa garden. Featuring an oval lawn formed by the carriage drive, a tennis court with original pavilion built in 1890, the elaborate timber picket fence and well established tree and shrubs species of the era.

From 1985 the garden underwent many changes as a result of new owners. Australian native species i.e. *Acacia* species (wattles), *Hymenosporum* (native frangipani) etc were introduced and many tree weed species were allowed to flourish i.e. *Pittosporum* species and *Cotonester* species. Structural additions such as urns, a small circular temple, the recessed seating area west of the court and new additional buildings at the rear of the mansion diverted from the original design and changed the Victorian feel of the garden.

In 1995 the present owners bought the property and have proceeded to slowly rejuvenate the garden and return it to its original Victorian glory.

A tree replacement programme has been implemented and is slowly removing self sown and inappropriate tree species, replacing them with species of the Victorian era e.g.: *Cinnamomum camphor* (Camphor Laurel), *Salix babylonica* (Weeping Willow), *Ulmus minor variegata* (Elm), *Fagus sylvatica purpurea* (Copper Beech), *Schinus molle* (Peppercorn), *Jacaranda mimosifolia* (Jacaranda), *Cupressus sempervirens 'Stricta'* (Dwarf Pencil Pine), *Phoenix canariensis* (Canary Island Date Palm).

Garden renovations have created 7 specific themes within the garden. The themes include: a fern garden, tropical garden, cherry walk, woodland garden, hot perennial border, grey border, and a winter border. These gardens act like rooms encouraging you to adventure further, increasing

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your curiosity to see what is around the next corner. The addition of the theme gardens helps generate interest throughout the year from texture, form and colour.

In 2007 an underground tank was installed beneath the lawn to the east of the residence. The capacity of the tank is over 300,000 litres and is fed from run off from the buildings and the drains throughout the property. This development will ensure the garden will remain healthy and in tact.

The gardens structural framework is made of a number of mature trees notably *Araucaria bidwillii* (Bunya Bunya Pine), *Agathis robusta* (Queensland Kauri), *Cupressus macrocarpa* (Monterey Cypress Pine), *Quercus robur* (English Oak), *Quercus palustris* (Pin Oak), *Brachychiton acerifolius* (Illawarra Flame Tree), *Phoenix canariensis* (Canary Island Date Palm), *Washingtonia filifera* (Cotton Palm), *Butia capitata* (Wine Palm), and *Trachycarpus fortunei* (Chinese Fan Palm).