

GARDEN NOTES

DURROL

The site on which Durrol sits was originally purchased circa 1878. In 1919 the original house and property were purchased by Mr Stanley Anketell Allen from Mr William Forster Woods, who was head of the Melbourne Stock Exchange. Since that time, it has been a treasured family home that has given pleasure to six generations of the Allen and Mackinnon families.

Durrol is one of Macedon's grand old gardens and is of national significance as an integral component of the Mount Macedon area, a precinct of hill station gardens of outstanding cultural significance.

In the 1920s, Mr and Mrs Allen added to the existing house and garden including a classic Walling designed terraced garden, comprising perfectly proportioned curved steps, central axis, stone paving and a strong architectural framework which handles the steeply sloping site magnificently. The complete Walling plan for the garden was never finished although the family still holds the original plan.

Beyond the Walling garden, are horse paddocks that run down to the Willimigongon Creek which forms the eastern boundary of the property.

The late owner of the property, Mrs Ian MacKinnon (daughter of Mr and Mrs Allen) also added to the Edwardian house and garden in the 1980s. After losing a third of the garden in the Ash Wednesday bush fires, of February 1983, she embarked on a planting program of notable trees and shrubs. Despite the loss of many large trees in the fires this is still a shady garden navigated by magnificently proportioned moss-covered steps and paths.

Unfortunately, the house, which was classified by the National Trust, was destroyed by fire in July 2018 but most of the garden and outbuildings remain, including the barn, stables and 'jam kitchen'. The 'jam kitchen' (still called this by the family) was built by Mr Allen so that his wife could make jams and jellies (which the cook did not have time to do because she was always cooking breakfast, lunch and dinner). It was also used to make delicious biscuits and sponges which were served at tennis, card and afternoon tea parties. A new house has been built in the same spot and fits in sympathetically with the still magnificent gardens including an adjacent weeping elm.

The trees at Durrol are a significant feature. Of particular interest are two European Lindens (*Tilia x europaea*) which are classified by the National Trust. Other notable trees include:

- Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*)
- Macedon Oak (*Quercus* 'Macedon')
- Redwood (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*)
- Variegated Weeping Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)
- *Cryptomeria Radicans*



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The vegetable garden at Durrol has always been a feature. It was in the vegetable garden, in 1928, that Mrs Allen commissioned Edna Walling. It represents generations of gardeners and always includes some traditional family favourites such as raspberries and red currants, which are always on the table at Christmas, Scarlet Runner beans and potatoes. It is also planted with rhubarb, artichokes and seasonal vegetables.

The garden is looked after by Michael Dale. He works at Durrol three days a week, and will be available on both Open Days, preserving what is already there whilst modernising and adding to plant collections. His predecessor 'Gail', looked after the gardens for 35 years.

These notes can be downloaded from the Open Gardens Victoria website:
www.opengardensvictoria.org.au