

Maryborough Butter Factory & Gardens

The Maryborough Butter Factory is a rare industrial icon from 1918. Designed by Charles Rice, an architect with a passion for the vernacular of timber truss work, the factory remains an outstanding example of timber construction at its most stylish. After a prestigious working life making and exporting prize winning butter around the world and becoming a leader in economic vitality for this community, the factory stepped back from butter making in 1974.

After a bit of a schuss and a makeover the Maryborough Butter Factory and Gardens (MBF&G) has a smart new cultural persona and plays a leadership role in energizing the local community.

MBF&G is delighted to join Open Gardens Victoria to present a drought tolerant Goldfields garden for visitors to enjoy.

A Drought Tolerant Garden

Prairie and gravel gardens are now at the forefront of horticultural inquiry. Biodiversity, ecosystems and sustainable practice are all loci for contemporary garden design. This garden is a sustainable dry climate oasis in the heart of the Victorian Goldfields.

Bureau of Meteorology

For all gardens the annual rainfall will scope the sorts of sustainable gardens that can be grown. This garden has an average annual rainfall of just 444mm. We can frequently have 12 weeks without meaningful rain and it is not uncommon to push 16 weeks. Supplementary watering in this climate is essential.

The Goldfields Colour Palette

This drought tolerant garden has a contemporary design. It's a silver and platinum garden that is studded with floral settings of amethyst, ruby and plum, offset sapphire and blue with pops of orange and sparkle of pure white. A glorious garden bursting with colour and life now grows where old timber offices and car parks once stood. This garden reflects the colours of the Goldfields.

Gravel Walkways

There was only a long disused car park here and the garden was created from scratch. Weeds were slashed, rubbish removed and only then could some gardening begin. The design features wide gravel paths over which perennial plants can spill in an informal manner. The gravel is from the local mullock heaps and is a combination of crushed quartz and clay, a practical and attractive nod to the gold mining era.

Mariners Reef

Mariners reef, a gold reef, comes right to the surface just behind the factory, so barrows of topsoil had to be introduced. The soil profile here is the typical Goldfields soil, shallow with a clay subsoil, lacking in both organic matter and nutrients. It has taken many years of digging in horse manure and leaf mould to build an adequate planting medium.

The Planting Begins

Choice planting began during the closing year of a long drought. Fortunately, Lambley Nursery is located just half an hour drive away at Ascot.

GARDEN NOTES

Lambley has an excellent example of a dry landscape garden, plus much sage advice was received from the proprietor, David Glenn.

The Pool Garden

The central structure of the pool garden is the base of a cooling system employed in 1918 to cool the butter factory. Fencing was introduced to contain an area without separating it from the overall design.

A View of the Paddock

Garden rooms as a design device are not employed in this garden. Instead it is intended that a good sense of walking through a paddock is created. The gravel paths appear from behind plants only to disappear again. Long views are created that draw the eye across the whole garden. Vistas are opened up and closed with arches and sitting areas.

A Post Industrial Garden Design

The garden is framed with powerful industrial architecture. The saw tooth roofline, the vertical thrust of the Doric chimney, the bulk of the butter factory and the complex rooflines locate the garden in a post industrial landscape. The garden's response is a practical no-nonsense approach. Paths take you where you need to go. No extraneous ornamentation distracts the eye. Sound proportion rules as it does in the factory. The plants provide a delightful entertainment for the eye as you journey through the garden.

Industrial and Rural Machinery

Industrial and rural machinery sits quietly to the side of the paths. They remind the garden that this site was once a productive workplace. They introduce sculptural forms and material into the garden which add relevant content and help create a unique experience.

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These notes can be downloaded from the Open Gardens Victoria website:

www.opengardensvictoria.org.au

