

GARDEN NOTES

MAWALLOK

The Mawallok garden is a privately-owned country garden surrounding the main homestead of a large rural property. The property is approximately 6,000 acres and runs sheep, cattle and a variety of crops. The Arts and Crafts style homestead was built in 1909. An earlier homestead is situated to the northwest of the present one and there are a number of cottages for employees on the property.

The garden at Mawallok is approximately seven acres and is laid out in the style of the English Landscape movement. William Guilfoyle (1840-1912) designed it in 1909 for the Russell family who had owned the property since 1847. The original plan and planting list have unfortunately been lost, though a later copy of the plan shows a closed garden with serpentine walks and palms dotted about the lawn in typical Guilfoyle fashion.

In the 1920s the 25-acre lake was created – designed by Sir John Monash – and the garden opened up to give a distant vista across the lake to the hills beyond. At the bottom of the garden is a six-hole golf course designed by Major Alex Russell in 1924. The stone ha-ha was constructed around 1937 and divides the garden from the golf course allowing an unimpeded view from the house to the lake. East of the lake is a natural spring, which flows at the rate of 10,000 gallons an hour; this feeds the lake and ensures that the garden is never without water.

The garden has undergone some changes particularly in the 1930s when it was 'simplified'. The palms were removed, serpentine walks were straightened and steps from the terrace to the main lawn were changed. In 1980 the Mitchell family purchased the property and in 1983 the paths were returned as near as possible to their original serpentine form, the terrace steps redesigned and a stone and timber pergola built. A rose parterre on the east lawn was removed and replaced with a stately Copper Beech, and a mixed border established below the front terrace in order to provide colour and interest during the summer months.

An established Gallipoli Oak (*Quercus coccifera* subsp. *calliprinos*) has been identified in the Rockery, thought to have been propagated from acorns collected by soldiers during the Gallipoli campaign. The Mitchells have propagated a number of Gallipoli Oaks from this tree's acorns and a number have been planted around the establishment.

The garden is protected by windbreaks of Monterey and Aleppo Pines, Monterey Cypress, Sugar Gums, Osage orange, cypress, privet hedges and stone walls. The designed landscape reflects 18th century English Picturesque design principles and later Gardenesque elements, and includes both formal and informal design features. The design includes both lawn and en-tout-cas tennis courts, curved and straight paths, a rockery and pond, terrace flagstones and bluestone steps, pergola, sundial, urns and informally shaped shrubberies around the edge of a broad sweeping lawn.

The garden is planted with a vast array of trees and shrubs, herbaceous plants and bulbs. The plantings include conifers, palms, deciduous and evergreen species, with variegated and coloured foliage, strappy and contrasting leaves and colourful flowering plants. The main lawn is framed with Algerian Oaks and Pin Oaks and densely planted shrubberies with *Pittosporum*, *Waterhousia*, *Laurus*, *Prunus*, *Arbutus*, *Corynocarpus*, *Alectryon*, *Cupressus*, *Erythrina*, *Fraxinus*, *Magnolia* and *Ulmus*. In March 1996 James Guilfoyle, grandson of William Guilfoyle, planted a Chinese Windmill Palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) on the western side of the garden. Three old Black Mulberry (*Morus nigra*) trees are found in front of the original bluestone homestead.

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



The present policy at Mawallok is to keep, and restore, the garden with planting that is sympathetic with Guilfoyle's intentions, maintaining its character, whilst being relevant to the owners' priorities, and remaining manageable at current staffing levels. In 1982, landscape architect John Patrick extensively surveyed the garden and conducted a plant identification programme. His plant list helped fill the gap in the absence of the original information. One new area beyond Guilfoyle's boundary was planted in the north-west corner of the garden in 1985. To the fore is an avenue of pleached tiliacs underplanted with liriopse and massed bulbs with herbaceous plants and mixed shrubs at the rear. The planting is sympathetic to but clearly different from that of Guilfoyle.

The house and garden are sited on a rocky barrier and 3,000 dray loads of soil were brought in from the paddocks in order to plant up the garden. The soil has a neutral pH thought to lean towards alkaline but there are examples of both lime-loving (e.g. Copper Beech, tiliac, acanthus, bergenia, buddleia) and acid-loving (arbutus, pieris, camellia) plants flourishing.

Three part-time gardeners maintain the garden with specialist contractors, such as arborists, employed as needed. Recent works include the renovation of golf greens and fairways, renewal of the en-tout-cas tennis court, renovation pruning of shrubs, removal and replacement of senescent trees, ongoing re-planting of perennials and shrubs and redevelopment of the vegetable garden. A new dry garden has been recently planted along the back drive and some enhancements around a new terrace at the north-western end of the house. As the garden is now into its second century, 'succession' plants are being introduced to maintain the appeal for future generations.

Autumnal highlights at Mawallok:

Vitis vinifera (ornamental grape vine) – Pergola

anemones, salvias, sedums, liriopse, plectranthus, hedychium – West Walk

Hydrangea villosa – Western Island Bed

Macleaya (plume poppy) – Pleached Walk

Caryopteris and *Bystropogon canariensis* (Canary Island Smoke Bush) – Berberis Bed

buddleias, phygelius, Canna species – Canna Bed

Eupatorium and *montanoa grandiflora* (Mexican Tree Daisy) – Rockery

Other significant trees and points of interest:

Quercus coccifera subsp. *Calliprinos* (Gallipoli Oak) – Rockery

Fagus sylvatica (Copper Beech) – Copper Beech Lawn

Betula pendula (Silver Birch copse) – West Lawn

Erythrina (Coral Tree) – West Walk

Pleached *Tilia* – Pleached Walk

Taxus baccata (English Yew) hedge – between Pleached Walk and Nursery

Vitis vinifera (ornamental grape vine) – Pergola

Cedrus atlantica 'Glaucac' (Blue Cedar) – Playhouse Lawn.

Proceeds from this opening will be donated to Beaufort and Sipton Health Services and the local CFA.

MAWALLOK
GARDEN MAP

