

Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne launches new 'How to Garden' to inspire and educate visitors about home gardening



Tuesday, 5 May 2026 - Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne has opened a new 'How to Garden' to inspire and educate visitors about home gardening with native Australian plants. The garden features a selection of new plants, long seating benches, a teaching circle, fire pit and modern educational signage.

It was designed by the Gardens' Landscape Architect of over 25 years, Andrew Laidlaw, who recently received the President's Award for an outstanding contribution to landscape architecture at the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects Victorian Awards.

He said that the redevelopment has been carefully designed to demonstrate the concept of a contemporary garden with a focus on biodiversity, culinary and medicinal plants, and correct plant placement.

"Visitors can gain an understanding of the benefits of a garden designed for biodiversity, and how, with good planting, we can attract animals and insects to the garden, including bandicoots, native bees, native birds and other wildlife to create rich and abundant landscapes," he said.

"They can learn about microclimates and selecting the right plant for the right location, such as planting in shady areas or areas with root-laden soil."

"They can also learn about traditional plant uses including their medicinal and culinary properties and see that these plants can be planted in the ground and spread throughout the garden rather than just grown in raised gardens," he continued. "Visitors are encouraged to touch and smell the plants in the garden for the full experience."

Examples of plants featured include *Eremophila alternifolia* (Emu Bush), which has medicinal uses, *Prostanthera incisa* (Native mint) used in teas, *Euclayptus polybractea*, which is particularly good for its oils, *Themeda triandra* (Kangaroo Grass), a grain used for bread making, *Arthropodium strictum* (Chocolate Lily) and *Arthropodium milleflorum* (Vanilla Lily), whose tubers are eaten by First Peoples and *Tasmannia xerophila subsp Robusta* (the Erinunderra Pepper) that was used as a pepper seasoning.

"Whether you are caring for a courtyard or a larger backyard, this garden will teach you the benefits of a native Australian garden – and how to get the best from it," he said.

“The fire pit with surrounding seating for up to 30 students, encourages people to connect with friends and family in gathering spaces within their own backyards, just as First Peoples have done for millennia in yarning circles,” he said.

The signage within the gardens and linked digital information provides gardening tips for all ages and skill levels, inspiring everyone to grow Australian natives. Visitors will also discover traditional plant uses and bush foods thanks to information developed in consultation with Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.

The redevelopment was made possible thanks to funding by the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust and former Gardens director Dr Philip Moors AO, who saw the initial development of the Australian garden 20 years ago, and his wife, Debbie Moors.

“This garden is a gift to the community and to future generations. I’ve always believed in the power of nature to inspire, restore and bring people together, and it’s incredibly rewarding to see that vision come to life here at Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne. I hope this space becomes somewhere people return to often — to pause, reflect and learn from the natural world,” said Dr Moors.

Cranbourne Gardens is dedicated solely to the display of native Australian plants. Last year, it was named the 6th top must-see garden globally by the [New York Times](#).

The ‘How to Garden’ can be found at the northern end of the Australian Garden at Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, near the Ian Potter Lakeside Precinct and beside the Lakeside Kiosk.

To find out more, click [here](#).

About Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne

Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne offers a natural bushland experience alongside the Australian Garden, an award-winning, contemporary botanic garden celebrating the beauty and diversity of Australian landscapes and flora and featuring over 100,000 plants from 1,900 plant varieties.

The Gardens are located in Cranbourne, on the tourism routes to Phillip Island and the Mornington Peninsula, making it a great stopover point for a day trip, or enroute to nearby locations such as Cruden Farm and Moonlit Sanctuary. It’s also close to other cultural destinations in the region, including Bunjil Place.

The bushland has over 450 indigenous plant species and includes over 10km of walking tracks, six kilometres of cycling tracks, a lookout tower, picturesque shelters, barbecues and playgrounds. It is a precious remnant of the vegetation that once covered the broader region and is actively managed to control the number of non-indigenous plants and exotic weeds.

There is a range of visitor programs, as well as self-guided walks available throughout the year.

Open 9:00am – 5:00pm daily, except Christmas Day.