

Booderee National Park

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Booderee Botanic Gardens

Booderee Botanic Gardens are the only Aboriginal owned botanic gardens in Australia. The Gardens, as part of Booderee National Park, are jointly managed between the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council and the Australian Government's Director of National Parks.

The Gardens cover 80 hectares of Booderee National Park and include a unique setting of cultivated areas surrounded by natural bushland. The Gardens showcase local Aboriginal (Koori) use of plants and the coastal flora of south eastern Australia.

Visitors can learn about bush tucker and medicinal uses of plants, the long association that Koori people have had with the area and the plants of south eastern Australia. There are a range of facilities and services available to help visitors appreciate and explore the Gardens including formed paths, self guided and guided walks, interpretive displays, picnic areas and more.

Past, present and future

As well as Aboriginal people having a long association with the area, the non-Aboriginal involvement in the area of the Gardens has been varied and interesting. In the early 1900 the site was part of a farm of the Australian piano manufacturer Octavius Beale. The farm, known as "Bherwerre", was used by Beale in an attempt to grow timber for his piano frames. The timber plantations failed and the farm then focussed on grazing and dairy. A rock commemorating the homestead site is located in the lawn area below the rainforest.

Management and development of the Gardens has been and continues to be an evolving process. Development of the site as a botanic gardens started in 1951 when the area was selected as the frost free annex of the Australian National Botanic Garden (ANBG) and was called the Jervis Bay Botanic Gardens.

Since the early days of the gardens, local Koori people from the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community have worked on the site, a tradition which is now into its third generation. Many of the paths, rock walls, garden beds and plantings were developed by these earlier generations of staff.

The local Koori community at Wreck Bay successfully acquired the ownership of the gardens, and the park, in 1995, and with the Director of National Parks, now jointly manage the Gardens for the enjoyment of everyone. To reflect the Aboriginal ownership of the gardens the name was changed to Booderee Botanic Gardens in 1997. In 2000 the Gardens ceased to be an annex of the ANBG, however strong ties and a close working relationship with the ANBG staff continue. The collections policy now focusses on the Aboriginal use of plants, as well as the flora of south eastern Australia's coastal environments.

New areas and facilities are being developed to further provide opportunities for visitors to learn more about the local flora and the Koori use of local plants. The Koori Garden and the education shelter are two such new developments. Other new initiatives include adopting water conservation measures and policies, such as using more local plants and installing new irrigation systems and water saving regimes. Such issues make the management of the gardens both dynamic and

challenging.

Visitor activities

Exploring the gardens

Learn about the fascinating plants of the region and how they have been and continue to be used by local Koori people. Follow the well formed paths through the rainforest, heath, forest and other cultivated areas. Many of the paths through the cultivated areas are suitable for assisted wheelchair use and prams.

Experience some of the natural coastal vegetation communities of the area by walking along one or more of the nature trails. You can combine the nature trails and other paths to do a loop walk around the Gardens of 3.7 kms. Allow from one hour to a whole day for your visit.

Enjoying the peace and quiet

Enjoy the peaceful setting of the Gardens by relaxing on the grass lawns, or using the picnic tables provided. At the Scribbly Lawn, electric BBQs and a sheltered picnic area are ideal for large groups or wet weather use. There are a number of beautiful [walking trails](#) through the Botanic Gardens and National Park and it is an excellent place to [observe birds](#) and other [fauna](#).

Education and guided tours

Koori led tours and other tours are available during the school holidays, and also on request (depending on staff availability). Guided school sessions are also available. Bookings are essential for all guided activities. Check the website for further information on educational tours or phone the Booderee Visitor Centre.

Public reference herbarium

A public reference herbarium is available for those wishing to identify their own plant specimens or for detailed study of the regional flora. Contact the Collections Officer to arrange a visit.

Opening Hours and Admission

The Gardens are open every day including public holidays. Admission to the Gardens is included in the Park use fee or Booderee National Park. Please pay at the park entrance station.

1 October - 30 April

Monday - Friday: 9.00am - 5.00pm

Weekends and Public Holidays: 8.00am - 6.00pm (Daylight Saving) | 9.00am - 5.00pm (EST)

1 May - 30 September

Monday - Friday: 9.00am - 4.00pm

Weekends and Public Holidays: 9.00am - 4.00pm

December/January School Holidays

Monday - Friday: 8.00am - 6.00pm

Weekends and Public Holidays: 8.00am - 6.00pm

Volunteering

Learn more about Booderee by joining the volunteer Park Care Group. The Group helps with propagation and revegetation projects in both the Gardens and the surrounding Park. To find out more information and to join the volunteer Park Care Group email: booderee.mail@environment.gov.au

Venue hire

The Gardens are available for special events such as weddings and other public gatherings. Permits and special conditions apply. To find out more email: booderee.mail@environment.gov.au

The Heath and Woodland Garden displays plants found in many south coast heath and woodland communities. Birds love the many flowering plants in this area.

The **Casuarina Lawn** contains a variety of casuarina species. Casuarina is the favourite food of the endangered glossy black cockatoo.

The **Eucalyptus Lawn** has some of the oldest plantings in the Gardens. It offers access to the Lake Trail.

The **Koori Garden** reflects plants used by local Koori people. The area is being developed with an education shelter, interpretive material and additional landscaping.

The **Scribbly Gum Lawn** has a shelter shed and electric BBQs. It is the hub of many of the Gardens' walks and a great place to relax. Watch out for the kookaburras!

Lake McKenzie is a perched lake that is home to the eastern long-necked turtle and seasonal birdlife. Water from the lake is used to irrigate the Gardens. The lake markers show metres above sea level.

Gardens in the **Waratah Lawn** area display waratahs, *Livistona* palms and many flowering plants. It is a great place to relax and picnic. A plaque commemorates the Botanic Gardens' 50th Anniversary.

The **Lake Trail** meanders through mature forest and has magnificent views of the lake.
distance: 1.3 km • grade: medium • time: 1 hr

The Heath and Woodland Trails wind through different plant communities where controlled fires encourage plant diversity. There is always something in flower - no matter what time of year. Stands of grass trees and Christmas bush are eye-catching!
distance: 1 km • grade: easy • time: 40 min

In the **Forest Garden** a tall eucalyptus canopy shelters many forest-floor shrubs. On the upper walk rock ledges are smothered in mosses and epiphytes.

The **Lookout Trail** offers great views across the Gardens and Lake McKenzie.
distance: 400 m • grade: easy • time: 10 min

The **Green Hut** is on the site of an old farm building. Displays in the hut provide a glimpse into the history of the area including the involvement of the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community.

The **Rainforest Gully** is full of tree ferns, palms, and other native plants adapted to this cool sheltered environment. A boardwalk offers great views of the creek.

The **Rock Lawn** provides access to the lake foreshore. A plaque features the layout of the old Bherwerre Farm.

Please remember:

To preserve the Gardens for everyone's enjoyment and safety:

- all plants and animals are protected – please do not remove flowers, seeds, or any other plant material and do not feed the wildlife
- secure your vehicles and bicycles in the car park
- remove valuables from your vehicle
- electric BBQs are provided – wood fires are not permitted
- keep to formed paths and tracks
- swimming in Lake McKenzie is not permitted
- take all rubbish with you or place in the bins provided
- pets are not permitted
- only drink water from bubblers provided – all other water is non-potable
- please report any hazards or dangers to Gardens' staff
- beware of spiders, snakes and ticks
- opening hours vary throughout the year – please check and depart before the closing time
- on repeated blasts from the siren, proceed to the car park area immediately
- activities in the Gardens are governed by the EPBC Act 1999 and Regulations 2000

- Road
- Service road
- Main path
- Minor path
- Nature trail
- Wheelchair assisted path
- Lookout
- Emergency evacuation point
- Toilets
- Baby change facility
- Information
- Shelter/BBQ
- Picnic table
- Drinking water
- Parking

