



Como Gardens Pty Ltd
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\$7.50 entry includes viewing of Car Museum

In 1873 William Chandler Junior selected 54 acres beside the Dandenong Creek in The Basin for which he paid 1 pound - an acre. After clearing the land, Chandler began growing vegetables and later turned his attention to fruit growing and flowers. This was the beginning of the famous "Como Nursery Gardens", well known throughout Victoria as the first producer of Boronia and specialists in azaleas, camellias and rare plants imported from Japan and other Western Countries.

In 1996 the property was purchased by George & Pat Hetrel. The Hetrel's had an overall vision to not only restore the 16 acres of garden, which had previously been used to showcase the plants sold by the Chandlers, but also to enhance the undeveloped areas of the property with appropriate landscaping. An additional wetland area with a working windmill has now been completed.

The museum George has created is not to be missed; it is housing some impressive cars and memorabilia.

Other extensive works undertaken include a 1 acre lake and a miniature railway that traverses three trestle bridges during its 650-metre journey through the gardens and tree-fern gullies. The trains have a stop off at the bush camp nestled beside one area of the creek flats.

The garden holds two collections of plants, Magnolia and Prunus, which are registered with the Garden Plant Conservation Association of Australia. There are over fifty-five Magnolias; some of these should still be in flower.

There are many beautiful shrubs and trees to look at and the short list that follows is just a small sample.

Pyrus Salicifolia "Pendula" - The Weeping Pear. The silvery grey, willow-like foliage makes this a very unusual deciduous tree. The single flowers are creamy white, ornamental miniature pears are produced in Autumn.

Morus Alba "Pendula" - Weeping White Mulberry. A very symmetrical weeping specimen grafted onto standards 8-10 feet high. Silkworms are traditionally fed on the leaves of this tree.

Liriodendron Tulipifera - The American Tulip Tree. One of the noblest, hardy deciduous trees in cultivation. Needs protection from extreme wind conditions. The yellowish green, sweetly scented flowers appear in the spring.

Illicium Floridanum - Bushy evergreen shrub. The highly aromatic leaves are dark green and leathery, the flowers are followed by distinctive star-shaped fruit which in addition to being used as a spice (star anise) are often substituted for the more expensive aniseed oil.

Bed J - *Luma Apiculata* - Small evergreen tree, used now extensively for hedging, it has a beautiful cinnamon coloured trunk splashed with white patches. Tiny white perfumed flowers in summer followed by black shiny edible berries, a lovely specimen.

Bed L - *Metasaquoia* - Deciduous conifer thought to have been extinct rediscovered in a Chinese village in 1941. It is similar in appearance to *Taxodium* but has a shaggy bark, its spring foliage is soft green like a Larch tree.

Bed N - *Quercus Suber* - Medium size tree wide spreading evergreen. Thick corky bark for which it is known used commercially in cork manufacturing.

Do not hesitate to ask if you have any difficulty finding these listed species.

We hope you enjoy your time spent in the garden.

George & Pat Hetrel

The map of Como Gardens can be found on Page 2

Our Scarecrow competition is held every April Open Garden Weekend

- A Historic Oak Tree
- B Lake and Wet Lands
- C Museum
- D Toilets
- E - X Garden Beds
- Z Rain Forest Creek

Carma Gardens

