

EXPLORE

As you roam the garden, feel free to collect interesting things. You'll discover that leaves, seeds, fruits and twigs come in a wide variety of forms. If you like, gather together a sample of each item on the tour.

Peculiar patterns abound in the garden and throughout the house. Natural features and floral designs are common, although they appear in surprising places.

Once you've finished the tour – there is always more to explore.

HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS...

- Ceramic edging tiles behind the vegetable garden
- Cast iron posts on the eastern verandah
- Brass bell-pull and knocker, main entrance to the house
- Split hardwood posts along the tearoom fence
- Iron fence spikes in the oak tree courtyard
- Oil cloth flooring in front entrance hall
- Embroidered muslin curtains in the drawing room
- Carved cedar bed legs in the library bedroom
- Marble mantle and fire surround in the dining room

LOOK LISTEN SMELL TOUCH



A BRIEF HISTORY

John Macarthur, a young English army lieutenant, his wife Elizabeth and young son Edward, arrived in Sydney in 1790. Their small cottage was commenced in 1793 on a grant of 100 acres near the head of the river at Parramatta. This land was traditionally owned by the Burramattagal clan of the local Darug people.

Sections of the early building were kept as the Macarthurs extended their homestead over the next decades. Elizabeth Farm is largely unchanged since the 1830s. It is among the nation's most important colonial sites and contains part of the oldest surviving European house in Australia.

John Macarthur was instrumental in the rebellion which overthrew Governor William Bligh in 1808. Deeply involved in politics and commerce, he was a leading promoter of the Australian wool industry and experimented with imported livestock and crops. John Macarthur died at Camden in 1834. Elizabeth Macarthur lived at Elizabeth Farm until her death in 1850.

The Macarthur family sold the estate in 1881 for suburban development and industrial sites. The 5 acre house block narrowly escaped destruction. From 1903 to 1968 Elizabeth Farm was owned by the Swann family, whose love of the house resulted in its survival.

In 1983, following several years of building repairs and conservation, the management of Elizabeth Farm was handed over to the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales. Today, as a modern museum, Elizabeth Farm invites visitors to explore and experience an early colonial homestead and its fascinating story.

ELIZABETH FARM

70 Alice Street Rosehill 2142 Australia
OPEN EVERYDAY 10am – 5pm
(closed Good Friday and Christmas Day)
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LET YOUR SENSES RUN WILD!



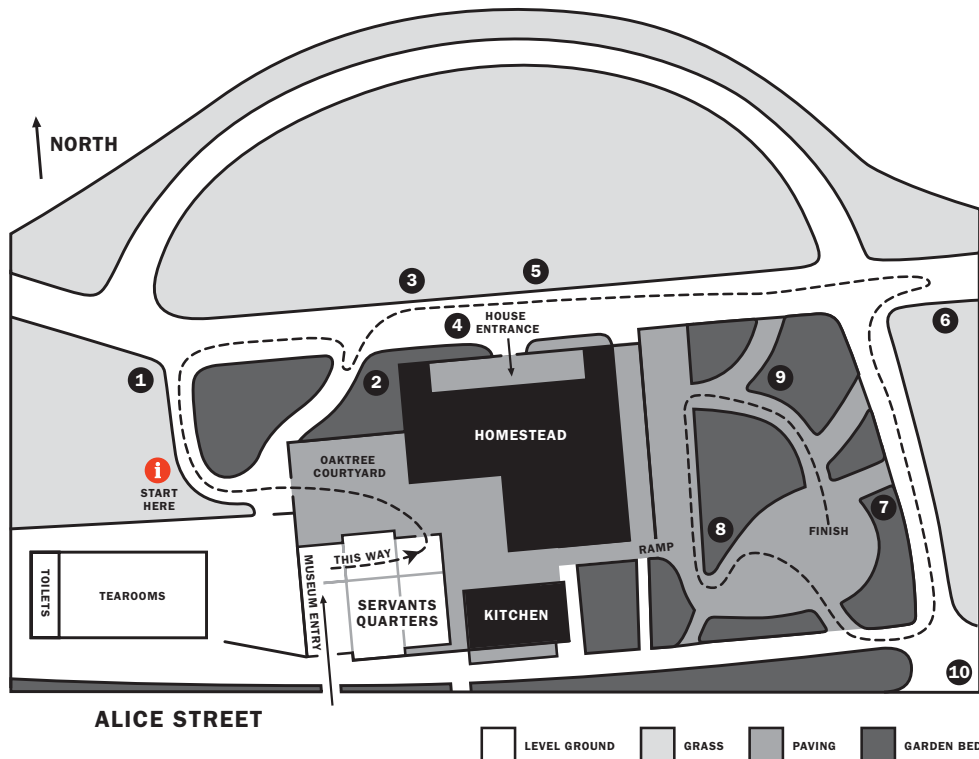
ELIZABETH FARM GARDEN SENSORY TOUR

Discover a living world of shapes, textures and sounds, as you wander through and experience the garden of Elizabeth Farm. Ten stops, plotted along a level and easily accessed pathway, have been marked with simple instruction panels. These invite visitors to tap, prod, jiggle, smell and study a selection of natural objects and materials.

An accompanying map, included in this brochure, provides further directional help.



LOOK LISTEN SMELL TOUCH



THE GARDEN

The garden of Elizabeth Farm is two centuries old. It contains some of the oldest European plants in Australia. Olive trees planted by the Macarthurs in 1805 continue to fruit regularly. A magnificent Chinese elm, planted in the 1850s, has been propped to support the weight of its aging limbs.

The present garden is based on its 1830s character and has been recreated using information from libraries, family records and surviving plants.

Plantings include roses, bulbs from South Africa and popular nineteenth century annuals: heliotrope, begonias, lemon verbena and columbines. Among the trees and shrubs are oleanders, sweet bays, persimmon, gardenia, pomegranate and macadamia.

John and Elizabeth Macarthur shared a dedication to the garden, introducing the pink china rose and camellias to Australia. Their two youngest sons, James and William,

later developed a large commercial garden at Camden, the family's principal estate.

Like many colonial properties, the homestead at Elizabeth Farm sits comfortably in its natural surroundings. Shady sandstone verandahs, often covered in vines, link rooms within the house to the flourishing colours, shapes and scents of the garden beyond.

THANKYOU FOR VISITING – PLEASE TELL YOUR FRIENDS

1. PRICKLY PEAR

Opuntia ficus-indica

spike, plump, thirsty

This plant has many limbs with strange, flat branches, almost like green flippers. These are covered in needles for protection so be careful if you touch them. The tough, leathery skin loves a hot, dry environment. There is no centre, just a maze of prickly shapes. Imagine it spreading across the land, over-running the countryside. Look for red tips on the branches. These grow into a juicy fruit that looks like a furry red pebble.

2. BANANA

Musa x paradisiaca

sway, flap, ragged

The long, ragged leaves of the banana tree brush against the building and each other making a gentle, whispering noise. Swaying slowly in the breeze, the leaves seem to dance. The powerful, fast growing trunk is filled with water. Shake the trunk to make it rustle or pull back the bark to feel its shiny, polished surface. From inside a dark red flower emerges a dangling bunch of bananas, swinging in the breeze like a waving hand.

3. CHERRY LAUREL

Prunus laurocerasus

glossy, smooth, waxy

This bush is like a big, green, glittering ball sitting on the grass. Look inside, through its thick coat of leaves, and you'll discover a hollow centre, rarely touched by daylight. The leaves are smooth and shiny like they have been polished. Pick a leaf and study the waxy surface. It feels like plastic. If you crush a leaf, the fragments will be brittle in your hand.

4. GRAVEL

Local ridge ironstone

crunch, grind, grumble

Move along the path and listen to the gravel. This crunchy, grumbling, grinding noise can sometimes sound like thunder. Travel in different ways – scrape, drag or march – the noise will change. Pick up or look closely at a handful of gravel and you will find that these are whole tiny stones. It takes a lot of work to rake and keep tidy.

5. COTTON PALM

Washingtonia filifera

tall, hollow, musical

Look up and, if you can, touch the long, straight, sturdy trunk. At the top is a messy head of branches. Big leaves grow in the shape of a fan, which split outwards into ragged, flapping, feathery fingers. Come close and feel the bark. It is rough and very hard. With your knuckles, knock on the hollow trunk. This tree is a living drum, a natural musical instrument.

6. GIANT BAMBOO

Bambusa balcooa

knock, wait, listen

Beneath the swaying canopy stands a crowded forest of poles. Young bamboo tips rise through a bed of brittle leaves. Close your eyes and listen. The sound of bamboo creaking is beautiful and mysterious. Shake a trunk to make leaves and limbs jostle and bump together. Run your hand over the trunk's smooth surface and you can sometimes feel a fine, furry coat.

7. BUSH LEMON

Citrus x taitensis

bumpy, rough, scented

Around summer, the lemon tree is covered in fragrant white flowers. Soon after its coat is dotted with bumpy yellow fruit, which eventually fall to the ground. Reach out and pick one. Hold it to your nose and smell the strong and biting citrus.

The shape of the lemon is uneven, while its surface is nobby. Crush a leaf in your hand and you'll discover they are also lemon scented. Imagine the taste of lemon in your mouth.

8. MAURITIUS HEMP

Furcraea foetida

mighty, sharp, sword

Careful if you touch this plant, the ends are sharp. The long, strong hemp branches reach upwards like swords defending the garden. This plant grows quickly and is very hard to remove. Split fibres make tough yarn for weaving. Run your hands along the grooved, leathery surface. Knock and listen. Squeeze a leaf, study its strength. Push and feel it spring back.

9. ALOE VERA

Aloe vera

spike, squeeze, juice

This plant has plump, fleshy fingers, edged with tiny spikes. Rain water collects in the centre and is slowly absorbed inside. Its flower is tall, pink, spidery and strange. Carefully press a leaf and observe what happens. Feel the soft centre, its fibre swollen with water. Break a leaf and squeeze out the sticky juice. Rub on your skin to comfort if you are injured, sore or sunburnt.

10. BUNYA BUNYA

Araucaria bidwillii

awesome, tall, prickly

Follow this monumental tree upwards and trace its circular crown. This tree stands like a giant green statue, guarding the ground below. The branches spread outwards and droop, ending in a nest of prickly fingers. Move to the bottom of the tree and examine the fallen foliage, the discarded leaves and branches. Shapes and textures are very strange, brittle and prickly to touch.