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MEDIA RELEASE

California dreaming – gardening in dry times



Struggling to keep your garden looking great during Melbourne's drought?

Hollywood has the answer, and Melbourne gardeners don't have to fly overseas to find it.

A tour through the Californian Collection at RBG Melbourne will reveal a host of practical ideas that can be applied at home.

This spring, RBG Melbourne is offering people the chance to learn more about the similar landscapes, plants and climates that California and Victoria share.

The tour starts with a presentation by the volunteer guides on the unique features of Californian gardens followed by a trip to the collection where curator Timothy Wall will cover the history of the collection and identify the signature plants that could do well in a home garden.

According to Timothy Wall, the idea behind the collection was to introduce the Californian flora to the Australian public to see how the plants would grow here.

Many of the plants come from the Santa Ana Botanic Garden in California. A former RBG curator brought the seeds back to Australia where they were germinated and grown in the nursery.

Plants on show include:

- The floral emblem of California, *Eschscholzia californica* or Californian **poppy** with its fine, grey-green foliage and lovely orange flowers.
- The *Carpentaria californica* which comes from a tiny area in the dry mountainous slopes of central California where it grows about six metres tall. In garden cultivation it grows 1.5 to 2 metres high, loves a sunny spot, with very well drained soil.
- The **Californian Tree Poppy**, or *Romneya coulteri* with grey leaves and crinkly paper-like petals; and
- The *Agave parryi* which has a flowering stem that reaches up several metres and only flowers every 25 to 30 years.

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Dates: 25 and 29 October

Time: 10am – 12:30pm

Cost: \$20 adult; \$15 concession

Bookings required. Tel: (03) 9252 2429

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