

# ABORIGINAL RESOURCE TRAIL

## An Education Program suitable for K -12

### Program Snapshot

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The Royal Botanic Gardens rest on the land that for countless generations was a traditional and highly significant camping and meeting place for the local custodians of the area - *Boonerung* and *Woiwurrung* of the *Kulin* people. This 1hr 45 min program is led by a Royal Botanic Gardens teaching staff and provides schools with an introduction to the Gardens which has more than 100 species of plants used by Aboriginal people for food, medicines, dyes, fibre and fire making.

The program and its accompanying Teachers' Kit provide excellent opportunity to address **Victorian Essential Learning Standards** across a range of Domains, including Civics and Citizenship, The Arts, Humanities and Science, while connecting your students to the natural world. (Please visit our website for our VELS Program Guides).

The broad themes in this program provide flexibility to focus on particular aspects that match the curriculum needs of the teacher. It also allows scope to provide choice for students experiences and interests.

### Focus Topics

- The richness of local Aboriginal culture, its past and present
- Australian plants, their uses and significance to Indigenous Australians
- Making connections with our own lives by exploring connections to the land and our sense of belonging
- Exploring sustainable land-use methods used by Aboriginal people with particular reference to the local Kulin groups, the Boonurung and the Woiwurrung
- Understanding the significance of the history of Aboriginal people on the Royal Botanic Gardens site and its relationship to the history of Melbourne.

### Experiences

Students explore the ancient river landscape of the Gardens examining its value in sustaining a rich cultural life. They explore the sensory quality of plants and their many and diverse uses in Aboriginal culture. Students are able to discuss their ideas regarding sustainable resource management and are introduced to examples, such as fire-stick farming and resin harvesting. Students are engaged through sensory exploration, story-telling and discussion.

The opportunity to examine and use artefacts makes the connection to plants and landscape memorable and meaningful for students. Children grind wattle seeds using grinding stones and attempt to make fire using traditional methods. Children can see and feel the fibre plant lomandra, growing and see an eel trap woven from its leaves while exploring the Birrarung (Yarra) wetland habitat at Long Island.



Ochre-grinding and mixing and painting gives students the opportunity to experience traditional painting methods whilst understanding the significance of communication in Aboriginal culture. By painting a journey they consider their own sense of belonging to land. The focus is on painting methods used by the Kulin people and the significance of ochre as a resource.

The texture and qualities of fibre plants are explored by children as they use indigenous plants such as *cumbungi* to make a simple 2-ply string. This social experience also provides them with the opportunity to teach each other, discuss their methods and ask questions.



## Significant Plants and Places

### Long Island

This ancient bank of the original Birrarung (Yarra River) forms an island in the billabong landscape now a part of the lake system at the Royal Botanic Gardens. Highly significant as traditional food gathering grounds, many links to the original occupants can be experienced here. Indigenous fauna has returned since the island has been revegetated with plants indigenous to the Lower Yarra habitat. Children look for the fragrant river mint, used for making tea, watch bellbirds feeding on the sugary lerps of eucalypt leaves and see eels and tortoises swim in the billabong.

### Remnant Plants

Trees highly significant in local Aboriginal culture such as the River Red-gum and Coastal Banksia exist as living remnants in the Royal Botanic Gardens. These trees could be over 300 years old and would have been valued resources pre European invasion. As valuable habitat trees, students can observe animals using them for food and shelter.

### The Australian Rainforest Walk

Australian rainforest plants provide a wealth of resources for medicine, food, tools, fibre and fire-making. Children meet the plants up close exploring the textures of plants such as the saw-leafed banksia, or the furry leaves of Blanket Leaf. The fragrance of the Eucalypt is iconic to the forest experience whilst other plants such as the Giant Stinging Tree, the Bird Catching Plant and the fish catching Foam Bark Tree capture the imagination.

### Teachers Kit

The teacher's kit *Kulin Kalk & Bik* (People, Plants and Place) which includes pre and post excursion activities and plant information can be downloaded from the website; [www.rbg.vic.gov.au/education/teacher\\_resources](http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/education/teacher_resources)

### Session Times:

Morning sessions 10.15am –12.00noon

Afternoon sessions 12.30pm –2.15pm

Please speak with our Booking Officer if these times are not suitable

### 2007 Prices:

\$9.00 per student including GST

Minimum Charge is \$150.00 for small groups

Teachers free of charge

### Contact

The Education Booking Officer  
on 9252 2358

Email: [edserv@rbg.vic.gov.au](mailto:edserv@rbg.vic.gov.au)

Or visit our website at  
[www.rbg.vic.gov.au/education](http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/education)

