



by Weston as an

containing over 200

different species of

conifers, deciduous

hardwoods and native

Australian trees. You can

visit Westbourne Woods

and a younger trial area

called the Lindsay Pryor

across the lake. The

these sites.

location map opposite

The trial areas were one

material. Seeds and

experimental arboretum



Source: National Library of Australia. District Map of Canberra. (nla.map-gmod81)

cuttings were also collected from areas such as Goulburn, local pastoral properties and from field trips to the coast. Established international seed and plant exchange networks were also used. Weston and later nursery directors took advantage of these networks by ordering seed and plant material from botanical gardens around Australia and the world.



#### **GUIDE TO WALKING CONDITIONS**

A circular walk around the English Garden will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The grade of the track is easy and mostly flat. The surface of the walking track is uneven however and is made up of earthen trails.

For information about guided walks around Westbourne Woods please make an enquiry via the Australian Garden History Society webpage (ACT/Monaro/Riverina Branch) which can be found at www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

### THANK YOU

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Healthy Parks Healthy People

# THE ENGLISH GARDEN

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The English Garden is one of Canberra's historic gardens. It was once part of the Commonwealth nursery which produced millions of trees and shrubs for the creation of the new bush capital of Canberra. Today the garden features many fine mature trees which tell a story about the selection and production of plant material for the new Australian capital city.

## SOME HISTORY

Canberra's Commonwealth nursery was established by Thomas Charles Weston in 1914. Weston came to Canberra with substantial experience in garden, nursery and landscape management. He had years of training as a garden apprentice in the United Kingdom. He later migrated to Australia and took up positions as head gardener at Admiralty House Sydney, Federal Government House Sydney and as Superintendent of the NSW State Nursery.

It was Weston's task in the early years of Canberra's development to both create the plant material and plant the city's landscape. The map over the page shows the early nursery areas, a new lake edge and the early intentions for this area to be developed as a zoo.

When Weston and his staff started work on the development of the city landscape they were faced with a degraded and mostly tree less landscape. Canberra at this time was also quite remote and the new Commonwealth government was struggling with the challenges

Source: Canberra Times

erritory and Municipal Service and shocks of the First World War. As an indication of the difficult planting conditions he sometimes hired a gelignite expert to dynamite planting holes.

Research was an essential part of the nursery's plant selection program. Trial areas were developed for the purposes of trialing new plant species. Further research by Weston was also carried out on the hybridisation of Eucalypts. His letters to J.H. Maiden, then director of the Botanic Gardens in Sydney, reflected his advances in this area.

The mature trees planted in the English Garden could be part of an early trial area. The area however does not show the same level of organisation as seen in other trial areas. We do know that this area was under planted with

azaleas and rhododendrons in the late 1950s and 1960s, by the Moore brothers, Percy and Jack. The area continued to be managed towards creating an English woodland garden theme. By the 1970s, this theme was well established. The garden also became known as a popular demonstration site for horticulture students. It is interesting to consider that some of the trees within the English Garden are likely to be the genetic parents of many of Canberra's mature exotic trees, especially those that have survived in the older areas of Canberra.

Trial areas were designed to examine issues such as tree growth, maintenance and tolerance to frost and disease. Westbourne Woods, which is now a part of the Royal Canberra Golf Club, is an example of one of these trial areas. This area was created Cupressus sempervirens stricta (Roman Cypress): Used extensively in Canberra during the 1920s and 1930s. Used in formal landscape treatments and in particular for its accent properties.

FENCE

PUBLIC

Pinus ponderosa (Western Yellow Pine): An evergreen survivor.

## ·TREE

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WALK

 Quercus robur (English Oak): Thought to have been introduced to Australia in pots, this tree is a pastoral favourite with memories of England. Seed for these trees was likely to have been collected from surrounding homesteads.

NURSERY WINDBREAK

Quercus palustris (Pin Oak): One of the most outstanding trees of Canberra. An Autumn favourite. A form of this tree (Freefall variety) was developed as a low maintenance street tree as the result of research by Robert Boden. frc ga Th to w fir fir Ci

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programs providing shelter from the harsh winds. Haig Park in the Canberra suburb of Braddon is an example of one of these major city windbreaks.

8 Caleocedrus decurrens (Incense Cedar): An evergreen decorative specimen tree.

of Thomas Weston.