



AUSTRALIAN  
GARDEN  
HISTORY  
SOCIETY

# Fruits of Orange

Exploring Central Western New South Wales

28 September 2026 OPTIONAL DAY TO MOLONG AND BEYOND

**46th national annual  
conference 24-27  
September 2026**

PRE- AND POST-TOURS  
TO THE BLUE MOUNTAINS





PANORAMA FROM MT CANOBOLAS, ORANGE

1/01

## Introduction

The city of Orange is located on Wiradjuri land. The Wiradjuri nation is defined by three rivers, the Lachlan (galari), Macquarie (wambool) and Murrumbidgee (murrumbidjeri), making it the largest Indigenous nation in New South Wales.

Looming above the gardens of Orange is Gaanha Bula/ Mt Canobolas, an extinct volcano, 1,395 metres above sea level. The mountain dominates the views and the identity of Orange. Its height produces a strong rainfall effect with water flowing in all directions from the summit.<sup>1</sup> Gaanha Bula is an important cultural site for local Indigenous people, who have gathered there for thousands of years.

The first European settlers arrived in the district in the 1820s. In 1829 'Orange' appears on the maps as a village parish, most likely named by Major Thomas Mitchell as a tribute to Prince William of Orange, with whom he had been associated during the Peninsular Wars in Spain.

Between 1851 to 1871, gold seekers made their way to region. Orange's population swelled. It was proclaimed a City on 19 July 1946.

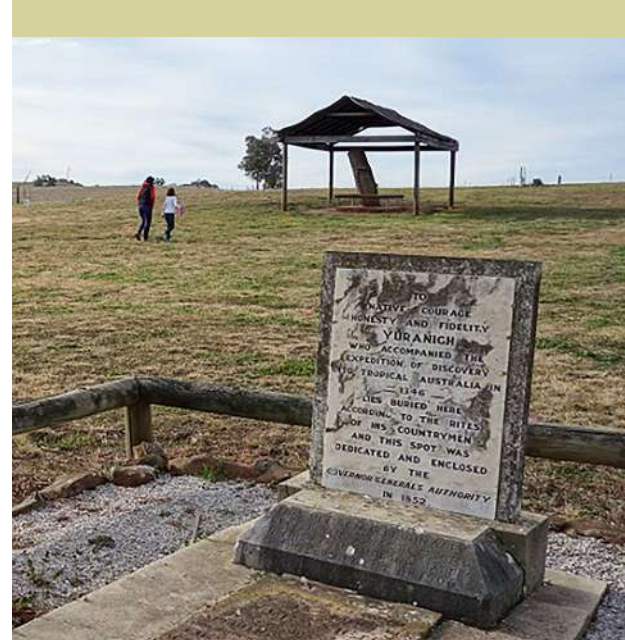
The conference program draws on this rich history, much influenced by the rich basalt soils that have allowed First Nations people to live well on this land, and that has seen waves of European horticultural endeavour. Once known for its cherries and apples, Orange is now most famous for its shiraz and chardonnay.

**Cover** Rowan Glen, photo Robert Bruce

**Top** Two women and a man admire the view from Mount Canobolas, date unknown, photo Orange City Library

**Middle** Headstone marking Yuranigh's grave, photo Anthony Hutchings. The gravesite of Yuranigh, Sir Thomas Mitchell's Aboriginal assistant, is the only known site in Australia where Aboriginal and European burial practices coexist.

**Bottom** Portrait of Prince of Orange, painted in 1817 by Karel Pieter Verhulstimage, image Wikimedia Commons



<sup>1</sup> See <https://orangeblossoms.orangemuseum.com.au/pages/intro/index.cfm>, a garden history of Orange, created by AGHS member, Lizzie Richards, who will be speaking at the conference.

## How to get to Orange



**Plane** The Sydney to Orange flight takes 45 minutes. Contact Qantas or REX (Regional Express) to book one of several daily flights available.

- 1800 227 4500 [qantas.com](http://qantas.com)
- 13 17 13 [rex.com.au](http://rex.com.au)

**Connection with Brisbane or Melbourne** (Essendon Airport) with Link Airways providing air services most days. 1300 851 269 [linkairways.com](http://linkairways.com)

**Train** The XPT service departs every day from Sydney Central Station in addition to other daily train/bus services. [transportnsw.info/regional](http://transportnsw.info/regional)

**Bus** Australia Wide Coaches luxury coach service is available Sydney to Orange and return: [austwidecoaches.com.au](http://austwidecoaches.com.au)

**Car** A 3.5 hour drive from Sydney or Canberra

## Where to stay

Orange has plenty of accommodation options, which are listed on the Orange360 website at: <https://www.orange360.com.au/Accommodation/All-Accommodation>

The following venues are all within walking distance of the Civic Theatre and have generously provided favourable arrangements for AGHS conference delegates (see email sent to AGHS members on 4 February for discount details):

- Mercure Hotel Orange
- Quest Apartments Orange
- The Hotel Canobolas
- Town Square Motel

# Program

The conference lectures will be held at the Orange Civic Theatre, 135 Byng Street, Orange. Lectures will take place on Friday, Saturday and Sunday mornings with bus tours in the afternoon.

Garden visits will require walking over short to moderate distances, slight inclines on paths on varying surfaces, steps and stairs.

**Thursday 24  
September  
2026**



4.30–6.00 PM Early registration and mayoral reception at the Orange Civic Theatre

5.00 PM Welcome to delegates,  
Mayor Tony Mileto

- Wine and finger food will be served.
- Dinner individually organised.

See <https://www.orange360.com.au/Things-to-do/Eat-Drink/Restaurants> for inspiration

In line with AGHS's framework for action on climate change, the conference organisers are striving for a light footprint at the conference by providing items that will be reusable for many years to come. Delegates are asked to bring their own reusable water bottles. The Civic Theatre has filtered water stations available.

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/2022/11/climate-change-position-statement-2/>

Friday 25  
September  
2026

Please note:  
The lecture program  
is subject to change.



A



B



C



D

TOP Lake Canobolas, photo courtesy  
Orange 360

A Gerald Power, photo  
<https://basaltorange.com.au/bookable-experiences/indigenous-cultural-experience>

B Avenue of Trees Memorial, Orange,  
photo <https://placesofpride.awm.gov.au/memorials/270976>

C Rowan Glen, photo Robert Bruce

D Photo vinography

8.00 AM **Conference registration** in Civic Theatre foyer

8.45 AM **Housekeeping**, Helen Oates, Conference Chair

9.00 AM **Welcome and conference opening**, Professor Tim Entwisle,  
AGHS Patron

9.15 AM **Welcome to Country**, Orange Local Aboriginal Land Council

### Wiradjuri country

9.30 AM **Geology, geography and climate**, Department of Primary  
Industries and Regional Development (speaker TBA)

10.00 AM **Bush Tucker**, Gerald Power, Indigenous Cultural Adventures

10.30–11.15 AM **Morning tea**

### AGHS theme of 2026: trees

11.15 AM **Memorial trees and avenues of honour**, Graham Wilson,  
AGHS Northern NSW

11.45 AM **Orange's public plantings and street trees**, Nigel Hobden,  
Orange City Council

### Afternoon tours

12.30 PM Board the coaches for an afternoon exploring the slopes of  
Mount Canobolas

- Lunch at Lake Canobolas
- Hear about the history of heritage apples, with a glass of bubbly in hand and an exquisite view at Borrodell Estate
- Visit Rowan Glen, the vibrant and extensive garden of our hosts, Joy and Kerry Rawson

Return to town for a guided tour of the Orange Botanic Gardens

### Evening wine tasting

5.00–7.00 PM Ballroom of the Hotel Canobolas: enjoy the company  
of friends while tasting delicious wines from several  
local wineries

Continue on to dinner as you please with individual  
bookings downstairs in the Hotel Canobolas or  
at one of the many restaurants available in the  
Orange CBD

**Saturday 26  
September  
2026**



**A**



**B**



**C**

### The European development of Orange

9.00 AM **Orange blossoms, a cultural history of gardens in Orange and district**, Elizabeth Richards, author of *Orange Blossoms*

9.30 AM **The Daltons of Orange**, Robert Bruce, Dalton family member and professional photographer

10.00 AM **Landscape design in the mid-20th century: Duntryleague and more**, Matthew Taylor, heritage landscape architect

10.30–11.15 AM Morning tea

### Horticulture in education

11.15 AM **Zeck and Senior illustration collections**, Plant Pathology Herbarium, Dr Jordan Bailey, NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

11.45 AM **The challenges of agricultural education**, Dave Anthony, Chair of the Tocal Advisory Council

### Afternoon tours

12.15 PM Board the coaches to Cook Park

- Boxed lunch and a stroll in Cook Park
- Visits to historic gardens in and around Orange city

An early finish will allow us to prepare for dinner. You are invited to wear a touch of orange.

### Conference dinner

5.30 PM Coaches will pick up guests from the Civic Theatre

6.00 PM Pre-dinner drinks accompanied by music performed by students at the Orange Conservatorium of Music

7.00 PM A touch of Orange at Banksia

- Dinner speaker Colleen Southwell, The Garden Curator



Photos, courtesy Colleen Southwell

**TOP** Poppies at Cook Park, photo courtesy Orange 360

**A** Rose Dalton (foreground) and two unknown women in the Duntryleague vineyard c.1900, photo courtesy Robert Bruce

**B** Powdery mildew of grapevines *Oidium* sp., host *Vitis vinifera*, illustration by Margaret Senior, copyright NSW Department of Primary Industries

**C** Spring Hill Public School, 15 schoolgirls in a flower and vegetable garden, photo Orange City Library



**Sunday 27  
September  
2026**

8.30 AM Australian Garden History Society Annual General Meeting

### **The horticultural history of the Central West**

9.15 AM **Cornish chain migration**, Bill Oates, AGHS Northern NSW and member of the Cornish Association of NSW

9.45 AM **Orchards into wine**, Peter Hedberg, member of the Orange Region Vignerons Association

10.15 to 11.00 AM Morning tea

### **The future of heritage organisations: panel discussion**

11.00 to 11.45 AM Chaired by Jane Lennon, with representation from the National Trust NSW (David Burdon), ICOMOS, Orange City Council (Alison Russell), AGHS (Tim Entwisle)

### **47th annual conference**

11.45 to 12.00 PM Robyn Oates, Chair, AGHS ACT, Monaro and Riverina

### **Conference in review**

12.00 PM Steve Halliday, AGHS Sydney

### **Wrap up and thanks**

12.15 PM Helen Oates, AGHS NMC Chair

12.15 to 1.00 PM Lunch in the Civic Square precinct

### **Afternoon tours**

1.00 PM Board the coaches for an afternoon in Millthorpe

- Visit to the Golden Memories Museum, where afternoon tea will be provided
- A walking tour of the village, including selected gardens and parks. Many shops will be open for us so be prepared to open your purse strings as you discover the wonderful wares available.
- The afternoon, and the conference, will conclude with drinks and canapes hosted by the Museum, showcasing wine from the three local tasting rooms *Tamburlaine*, *The Slow Wine Co* and *Angullong*.

Coaches will return to the Civic Theatre in time for delegates to make their way to dinner of their choosing.

You have the opportunity to be dropped off at Orange airport if your flight leaves this evening.



**TOP** Vineyard, photo Robert Bruce

**A** Byng, originally named 'Cornish Settlement', photo Bill Oates

**B** Millthorpe Museum, photo Golden Memories Museum

**C** Magnolias, photo Helen Oates

**D** Photo by John on Unsplash

# Optional day

## Tour to Molong and beyond

**Monday 28  
September  
2026**

### Meet the coaches at the Civic Theatre at 8.30am

- Leaving Orange and heading west, the altitude drops and horticultural variations appear. First, we will visit another Dalton family home, Kangarooie, with the expert guidance of Robert Bruce and the onsite gardener Coeey Mutton. Now owned by the Gilmandyke Pastoral Company, the future of the extensive garden and homestead is assured.
- We will then visit the Molong Museum, which has exhibitions on the history of Fairbridge Farm established in 1938 as a home for child migrants sent from the United Kingdom, the development of the Packham pear and other fascinating displays.
- Morning tea will be provided by the Molong Historical Society volunteers.
- Wiamera, a spectacular native garden will provide a noticeable contrast to the colonial gardens we will have seen throughout the conference and will showcase how gardens can be adapted to cope with variations in climate.
- We'll enjoy lunch at an historic homestead. The tour includes both Boree Nyrang, whose magnificent house has a library dedicated to Banjo Paterson, and Boree Cabonne, a significant pastoral property.
- Our travels loop us back into Orange through Nashdale and orcharding and winery country. Spectacular scenery is a highlight of our day.



A



B



C

A Kangarooie, photo Robert Bruce

B The first party of children for the Fairbridge Farm School pose for the camera on the SS Orama, 1938. Photo courtesy Woods Collection, Molong and District Historical Society

C Wiamera, photo Bill Oates

# Pre- and post-conference tours

Led by Stuart Read

**Tuesday 22 to  
Thursday 24  
September  
2026**

**Tuesday 29  
September  
to Thursday 1  
October 2026**

## Day 1: Orange to Bathurst to Leura

- Bathurst: visit the magnificent Abercrombie House, Eglinton, then lunch
- Bathurst to Leura: visit a Paul Sorensen-designed garden, Fjell Heim (home in the mountains, in Norwegian)
- Check into Fairmont Resort in Leura NSW

## Day 2: Leura and Blackheath

- Visit Sorensen's masterpiece, Everglades, Leura
- Lunch in Leura, visit Campbell's Rhododendron Gardens at Blackheath

## Day 3: Leura to Little Hartley, Bathurst and Orange

- Visit Highfields garden, Little Hartley, created by Clover Hill Rare Plants's David Kennedy and his partner
- Lunch in Bathurst (further details TBA)
- On to Orange by mid-afternoon

A Abercrombie House, photo C Morgan

B View of the Blue Mountains from the Fairmont Hotel, photo courtesy the hotel

C Everglades, photo Stuart Read

D Campbell's Rhododendron Gardens, photo Francesca Beddie

E Irises and Jerusalem sage at Highfields, photo Stuart Read





Photo Helen Oates

## **\$980 FULL CONFERENCE**

Includes the welcome event, lectures, all morning and afternoon teas, all lunches and the conference dinner

## **\$250 LECTURES-ONLY** (open to non-AGHS members)

Three half days of lectures and morning teas (open to non-AGHS members)

**VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE** details to be advised

## **\$150 CONFERENCE DINNER**

Lectures-only delegates and/or extra guests. This includes pre-dinner drinks and wine at dinner.

## **\$300 OPTIONAL DAY** (numbers limited to 150 people)

Includes garden visits, morning and afternoon tea, lunch, coach transport

## **PRE- AND POST- CONFERENCE TOUR** (Numbers for these tours are limited to 50 people per tour)

- 3 days, 2 nights at the Fairmont Resort, with all meals included in Bathurst and the Blue Mountains
- \$1,060 (share per person)
- \$1,200 (single per person)

## **REFUND POLICY**

- Before 5 August 2026 – 90% refund
- Between 5 August to 31 August 2026 – 60% refund
- From 1 September no refund
- We strongly advise you have travel insurance.

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The conference, pre- and post-tours and the optional day are for AGHS members only.  
If you would like to attend the full conference, consider becoming a member:

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/membership/>