

Wellingtonia Avenue Ballarat Botanical Gardens

Avenue of Sequoiadendron Giganteum trees planted between 1863 and 1874.

These trees are a native of central California and were imported from America. The Avenue was planted 50 chains on the North of the Entrance and 30 chains on the South side with a central gap of 3 chains. There were 28 trees in all, the whole Avenue is 1 mile long with the trees planted at 1 chain (22 yards) intervals. The British called them "Wellingtonias", the Americans would have preferred "Washingtonias"

A number have been lost over the years and particularly due to the drought in the last 10 years several in the South have become very sick with the Canker, a disease poorly understood. Various factors could be responsible and probably are.

The Encyclopaedia Botanica states "it prefers deep cool soils in an open sunny position and is frost resistant and **drought tender**". For many years lawn had been developed and watered up to the trees causing the roots to come to the surface. Compaction has occurred where close to paths, and possible fungal and bacterial disease. Cockatoos have added to the damage. To overcome these problems the staff have inserted underground watering through several kilometres of hose, (each area capable of being monitored re. amount of water supplied) Several hundred pits have been drilled with water conserving agents added then filled with scoria and covered with mulch. The trees have been treated with anti fungals and anti bacterial agents and areas around the trees have been cleared of grass. Significantly, the trees to the North appear to have survived better than those to the South. Some individual trees have shown a distinct variation of the foliage on their East and West sides which adds to the conundrum.

The whole Avenue of 28 trees has been placed on the "Register of Significant Trees in Victorian Botanic Gardens" by Heritage Victoria as of cultural Heritage significance.

The future of the Avenue is questionable, particularly concerning the advisability of replanting Sequoias in what has been shown to be a less than favourable environment.

John Garner June 2009

WELLINGTONIA AVENUE, Ballarat Botanical Gardens.

- Avenue of Sequoiadendron Giganteum trees planted between 1863 and 1874
- Imported from America. British called them Wellingtonia, Americans wanted Washingtonia!
- In California they become huge trees and have a long life.
- Described as preferring deep soils and drought tender.
- Planted 50 chains to the North and 30 chains to the South with central gap, one chain apart.
- Therefore one mile in length.
- Now have problems and several have died and some replaced. Have developed Canker.
- Multifactorial: - 1. Drought.
 - 2. Compaction
 - 3. Lawns up to the trunk, watering causing roots to come up.
 - 4. Cockatoos.
 - 5. Canker imperfectly understood – Virus, fungus, bacterial.
- Measures taken by Council and Staff: -
 - 1. Underground watering.
 - 2. Many kilometres of hose.
 - 3. Anti bacterial, antifungal agents.
 - 4. Several hundred pits drilled with water conserving agents and filled with scoria
 - 5. Heavily mulched and lawn taken back from the trunk.
- The trees to the North have managed better than to the South.
- With the new fernery design should be able to see all along the Avenue.
- The whole Avenue has been placed on the Registry of Significant trees in Victorian Botanic Gardens.