

Silent Spaces Trail

We are soothed by the sounds of nature and research proves this. Spending silent time in nature can bring us comfort and help us feel restored. Green, calm places promote inner stillness.

“Finding the time and space in which to be silent is important for us all.”

Satish Kumar, environmental activist



In 2016 English garden writer Liz Ware set up the Silent Space project to help people enjoy peaceful time in green spaces. A handful of British gardens agreed to reserve an area where people could be silent – www.silentspace.org.uk

Dunedin Botanic Garden is the first garden in the southern hemisphere to join but has chosen to create a whole trail. It's not the spaces that are kept silent but instead, visitors are invited to travel silently from spot to spot with open ears, observing and enjoying the natural sounds.

“Silence is not the absence of something, but the presence of everything.”

Gordon Hempton, acoustic ecologist

Switch Off and Switch On

You're cordially invited to turn off technology, stay silent and soak up the sounds. Savour the sensory experiences. Escape and enjoy.

Seven silent spaces offer a loop walk around the upper botanic garden. Some have seats, others a view. If one's too noisy, move on to the next one. The whole route takes about an hour to walk without stopping.

And if it's raining – why not? There's nothing cosier than the sound of rain on an umbrella.

Travelling Silence

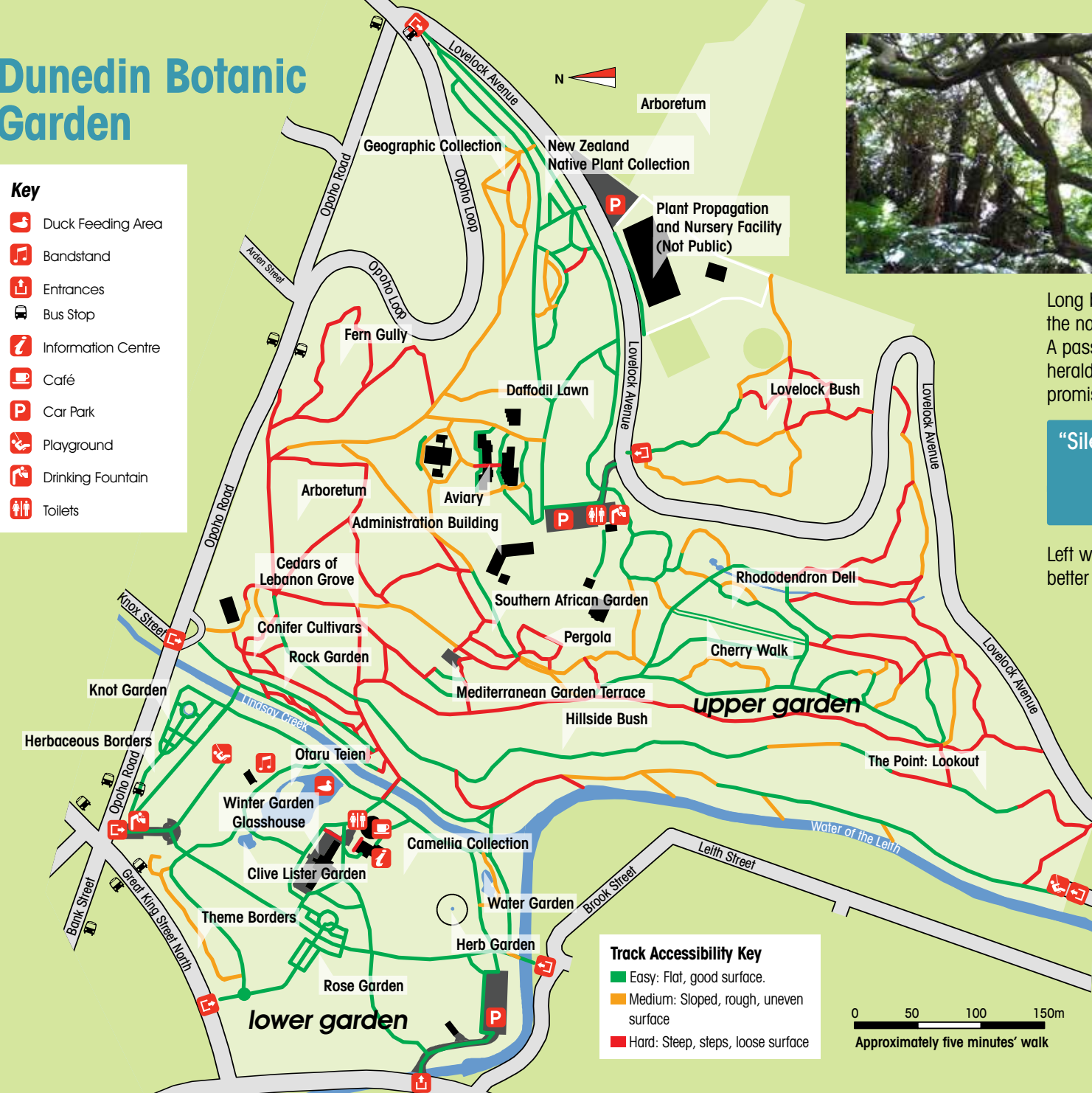
Spaces are linked by tracks. If you're with other people, feel free to experiment with something that has worked for others – travel through the bush areas about 30 seconds apart from each other – separately but still together.



Dunedin Botanic Garden

Key

- Duck Feeding Area
- Bandstand
- Entrances
- Bus Stop
- Information Centre
- Café
- Car Park
- Playground
- Drinking Fountain
- Toilets



Long before the noises of humankind, there were only the sounds of the natural world. Our ears evolved perfectly to hear these sounds. A passing breeze indicates a weather change, birdsongs of spring herald a return to growth and prosperity, an approaching storm promising relief from drought.

“Silence nurtures our nature, our human nature, and lets us know who we are.”

Gordon Hempton and John Grossman

Left with a more receptive mind and a more attuned ear, we become better listeners, not only to nature but to each other.



www.silentspace.org.uk



DUNEDIN BOTANIC GARDEN



Silent Spaces Trail

Under the Oaks 1

The arboretum provides a view of the flat lower botanic garden, traditionally the most visited area of the garden.



Hillside Bush 2

Mostly flat, this track travels above a rushing river. Can you hear it?



The Point Lookout 3

Like the bow of a ship, this spot points out towards the city, giving wide views over the university area.



Rhododendron Dell Bush 4

Soft tracks and boardwalk take you past a restful bush scene. In summer you might prefer to walk barefoot up the grassy Cherry Walk.



Dell Within the Dell 5

Visitors on this sheltered seat in the Rhododendron Dell are sometimes treated to the calls of wild native birds.



Lovelock Bush 6

See how slowly you feel like travelling this flat loop track.



Upper Garden

0 50 100 150m
Approximately five minutes' walk



Touch Trail 7

Touch and feel the textures of native plants as you travel along the concrete tiles. There's one plant you shouldn't touch, though - the spiky *Aciphylla*!



Scleranthus



Aciphylla

Mini Mountaintop 8

Mimicking an alpine scree, this bed is a good home for native insects. Native plant pollinators are tiny and many are active only in summer but look and listen and see what you can see.



Secret Lawn 9

On a far corner of the botanic garden, this gently sloping lawn has a secluded feel.



Friendship Lawn 10

Wide open views of the sky make this a mind-opening spot to lie back and watch the clouds.



Fern Gully 11

Relish the wilderness feel.



In the Trees 12

Paths are mown through the grass of the arboretum and a peaceful seat sits trackside.



Sun Soaked Terrace 13

You can see right up the Leith Valley, following the river past forested hills to its source beyond.

