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# WANNON LEA GARDEN & ORCHARD



23055 Wannonlea Morgiana  
Rd Wannon 0004



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Rd Wannon 0005

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## Location

RMB 8720 Morgiana Road, WANNON VIC 3301 - Property No 2021200

## Municipality

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

## Level of significance

Stage 2 study complete

## Heritage Listing

Southern Grampians Shire

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

The garden and orchard of Wannon Lea surround a typical early late nineteenth or early twentieth century weatherboard farmhouse. The garden is sited adjacent to the Morgiana Road, approximately 1.2km from the Glenelg Highway at Wannon. The garden and orchard are as unusual as the farmstead is vernacular. While overgrown, both garden and orchard are excellent examples of domestic landscaping. The house is approached by a curved drive, with a turning circle enclosing a bed in front of the house. Along the drive are massed exotic shrubs, including privet, agapanthus, cotoneaster, with strategically placed larger garden specimens such as Canary Island palm. Separated from the drive by a post and wire fence with triangular rail cap, is a small park of conifers, including *Araucaria bidwillii*, *Cupressus macrocarpa* 'horizontalis', *Cupressus sempervirens* and *Cupressus macrocarpa aurea*. Perennial herbaceous borders with ornamental shrubs including camellias and

roses flank the house on the south side. Paths and gates are marked by specimens of *Cupressus sempervirens* 'stricta'. The rear garden is flanked by a coprosma hedge and buckthorn on the south side. The rear garden contains many fruit trees, which provides continuity with the extensive orchard laid out on the north side of the house block. At the end of the garden stand a large olive tree and peppercorn, with a Tagasaste and prickly pear nearby. In the home paddock to the south of the homestead stand a number of sheds, with the whole protected by a windbreak of senescent *Pinus radiata*. The orchard is laid out in a practical grid with the trees approximately 4.0m apart. The orchard retains many significant fruit trees including some relatively rare specimens such as a blood orange, two persimmons, pomegranates, and an osage orange. The Freeman family established the property in 1910 and operated a mail-order nursery specialising in pelargoniums and geraniums as well as selling fruit from the orchard at a stall on the Glenelg Highway. The garden around the house has many unusual varieties of geranium and pelargonium planted throughout. The nursery and garden workings, presumably ephemeral, have since disappeared. The house, which has been altered, is of only complementary significance.

How is it significant?

Wannon Lea garden and orchard is of aesthetic and historical significance to the district of Wannon and the Southern Grampians Shire.

Why is it significant?

The garden and orchard at Wannon Lea are of aesthetic significance because they represent an unusual example of large scale 'grand' landscape design applied to a modest domestic and commercial setting. The relationship of the garden design to the grand designs of many Western District mansions is evident in the picturesque curved drive, the use of massed plantings and exotic specimen plants, the conifer park, and the use of hedges to create separate zones, albeit on a piece of land not much larger than a suburban allotment. The traditionally pragmatic grid layout of the orchard provides another contrast.

The garden and orchard are of historical significance for their association with the Freeman family, as one of the few commercial orchards in the shire at any time, and for the early use of the mail order system. No other example of a mail order nursery business at this time is known in Victoria. It was made possible by the construction of the railway and a station at Wannon in the late 1800s. Of further historical significance is the collection of early, rare and highly unusual fruit trees and varieties of the more common fruit trees. The Osage oranges, Blood oranges, persimon and pomegranate are rare and suggest highly educated and successful plantmen and women.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Southern Grampians - Southern Grampians Shire Heritage Study, Timothy Hubbard P/L, Annabel Neylon, 2002;
Construction dates	1900,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	23055
Property Number	

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## Physical Description 1

Wannon Lea garden and orchard surrounds a typical late 19th century vernacular weatherboard farmhouse. The house is sited towards the road, turning its back to any views to the valley of the Wannon River. The garden and orchard, while overgrown, are excellent examples of domestic landscaping. The house is approached picturesquely by a curved drive, with a turning circle enclosing a bed in front of the house. Along the drive are massed exotic shrubs, including privet, agapanthus, cotoneaster, with strategically placed larger garden specimens such as Canary Island palm. Separated from the drive by a post and wire fence with triangular rail cap, is a small park of conifers, including *Araucaria* sp, *Cupressus macrocarpa* and *Cupressus macrocarpa*.

aurea. Perennial herbaceous borders with ornamental shrubs including camellia varieties flank the house on the south side. Paths and gates are marked by specimens of Cupressus sempervirens 'stricta'. The rear garden is flanked by a coprosma hedge and buckthorn on the south side. The rear garden contains many fruit trees, which provides continuity with the extensive orchard laid out on the north side of the house block. At the end of the garden stand a large olive tree and peppercorn, with a Tagasaste and prickly pear nearby. In the home paddock to the south of the homestead stand a number of sheds, with the whole protected by a windbreak of Pinus radiata. The orchard is laid out in a practical grid with the trees approximately 4.0m apart. The orchard retains many significant fruit trees including some relatively rare specimens such as a blood orange, two persimmons, pomegranates, and an osage orange. The substantial number and range of more common fruit varieties is also significant.

A timber and iron wool shed is located approximately 750 metres to the north, adjacent to the Thomas Clark viewing area, overlooking the Wannan Falls. It is in fair condition.

## **Physical Conditions**

The garden is overgrown, but retains many fine specimens of early 20th century plantings. If the whole of the paddock was not planted out, it appears that most of the orchard trees have survived although many are in poor condition. The woolshed is in fair condition.

## **Historical Australian Themes**

Theme 3 Developing Local, Regional and National Economies

3.5 Developing primary production

3.9 Farming for commercial profit

3.12 Feeding People

3.12.2 Developing sources of fresh local produce

Theme 8 Developing Australia's Cultural Life

8.12 Living in and around Australian homes

8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

## **Usage/Former Usage**

Primary production

Residential

## **Integrity**

fair degree of inactness

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*