

# *Lepidozamia peroffskyana* Pineapple Zamia



***Lepidozamia peroffskyana*** in 21st Century Garden, Geelong Botanic Gardens (GBG), Nov 2015. Photo DJ, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

## Overview:

*Lepidozamia peroffskyana* is commonly known as a Pineapple Zamia. Other common names include: Scaly Zamia and Pineapple Cycad. It is a slow growing plant which belongs to the cycad group of plants in the Zamiaceae family.

It is endemic in Eastern Australia south-eastern Qld and north-eastern N.S.W., from the ranges NW of Brisbane to the Manning River district. It grows in wet sclerophyll forests or on rainforest margins, typically in steep terrain in large dense clusters (Flora of Australia and PACSOA Wiki).

## History:

The *Lepidozamia peroffskyana* is a relic of the long-lived cycad species that were abundant in the Mesozoic era, 252 to 143 million years ago (Mya) (The Gardens Magazine, 2021), dwindled in species, then ediversified in the Miocene 23 to 5 Mya (Nagalingum, 2011). In 1857 the German botanist, Eduard August von Regel, first scientifically described this plant, from a specimen growing in the St. Petersburg Botanic Garden, where he was Director (The Gardens Magazine Autumn 2021, World Flora Online and Wikipedia).



***Lepidozamia peroffskyana*:**

Left, male cone about to shed pollen, Sydney Botanic Garden, Photo Tony Rodd, Flickr CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

Right, female cone, GBG, Nov 2015.

Photo DJ, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

**Description:**

*Lepidozamia peroffskyana* grows up to seven metres making it one of the tallest cycads. The leaves are dark green and glossy which look like palm fronds (Australian National Botanic Gardens, Growing Native Plants).

Male and female plants are only easily differentiated when they produce their distinctive cones. Male cones are slenderer approximately “50–60 cm long and 10–12 cm wide, cylindrical and curved, and when about to shed pollen, they enlarge in a spiral fashion and can extend to 1 m in length” (Australian National Botanic Gardens, Growing Native Plants). In contrast female cones are “50–60 cm long and 20–25 cm wide, grey-green and barrel shaped and when ripe break apart to release oblong, bright red seeds approximately 50mm long by 25 mm wide” (Australian Native Plants Society (Australia)).

**Cultivation:**

*Lepidozamia peroffskyana* has been cultivated for many years making it popular in landscaping. It is a slow growing plant producing an attractive foliage display that can withstand dry periods. When in the home garden, it grows best in filtered sun / partial shade (Australian Native Plants Society (Australia)). It can also be grown in pots as a display / feature plant.

**Cones:**

Each day, the male cones heat up and produce foul-smelling chemicals. As male cones open they make the perfect home for swarms of Tranes weevils that offer shelter and food. These weevils breed and lay their larvae in the male cones. These cones become food for the weevils resulting in the rapid destruction of these cones. While they feast, the weevils collect sticky pollen on their legs and bodies which is transferred from the male to the female plants. Following pollination red seeds are developed dropping to the ground as the large female cone opens (Botanic Gardens of Sydney and PACSOA wiki).

## Uses:

Similar to other cycads the seeds contain toxic compounds. Despite this, they are eaten by kangaroos, possums and rats. First Nations People developed vigorous methods of leaching to prepare the seed and neutralise / remove the toxins and make them edible (Plant of the Month, (April 2019) Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney and (Australian Native Plants Society (Australia)).



Above, scales of *Lepidozamia peroffskyana* male cone showing pollen cases after pollination, GBG, Jan 2016.  
Photo DJ, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.



Left, *Zamia furfuracea* pollen cone with *Rhopalotria furfuracea* weevil pollinators. Below, *Tranes lyterioides* weevil pollinators of *Lepidozamia peroffskyana*.  
Photos from paper Shayla Salzman, 2025, CC BY 4.0.





***Lepidozamia peroffskyana***, Left, female cone after shedding some scales. Note the seeds attached below each scale. Below, scales after shedding, showing two seeds per scale. GBG, Jul 2015. Photo DJ, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0



**References:**

Australian National Botanic Gardens, Growing Native Plants, *Lepidozamia peroffskyana*, website: <https://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/trainees-2018/lepidozamia-peroffskyana.html> accessed 21.12.2025

Australian Native Plants Society (Australia), *Lepidozamia peroffskyana*, [https://anspa.org.au/plant\\_profiles/lepidozamia-peroffskyana/](https://anspa.org.au/plant_profiles/lepidozamia-peroffskyana/) accessed 21.12.2025

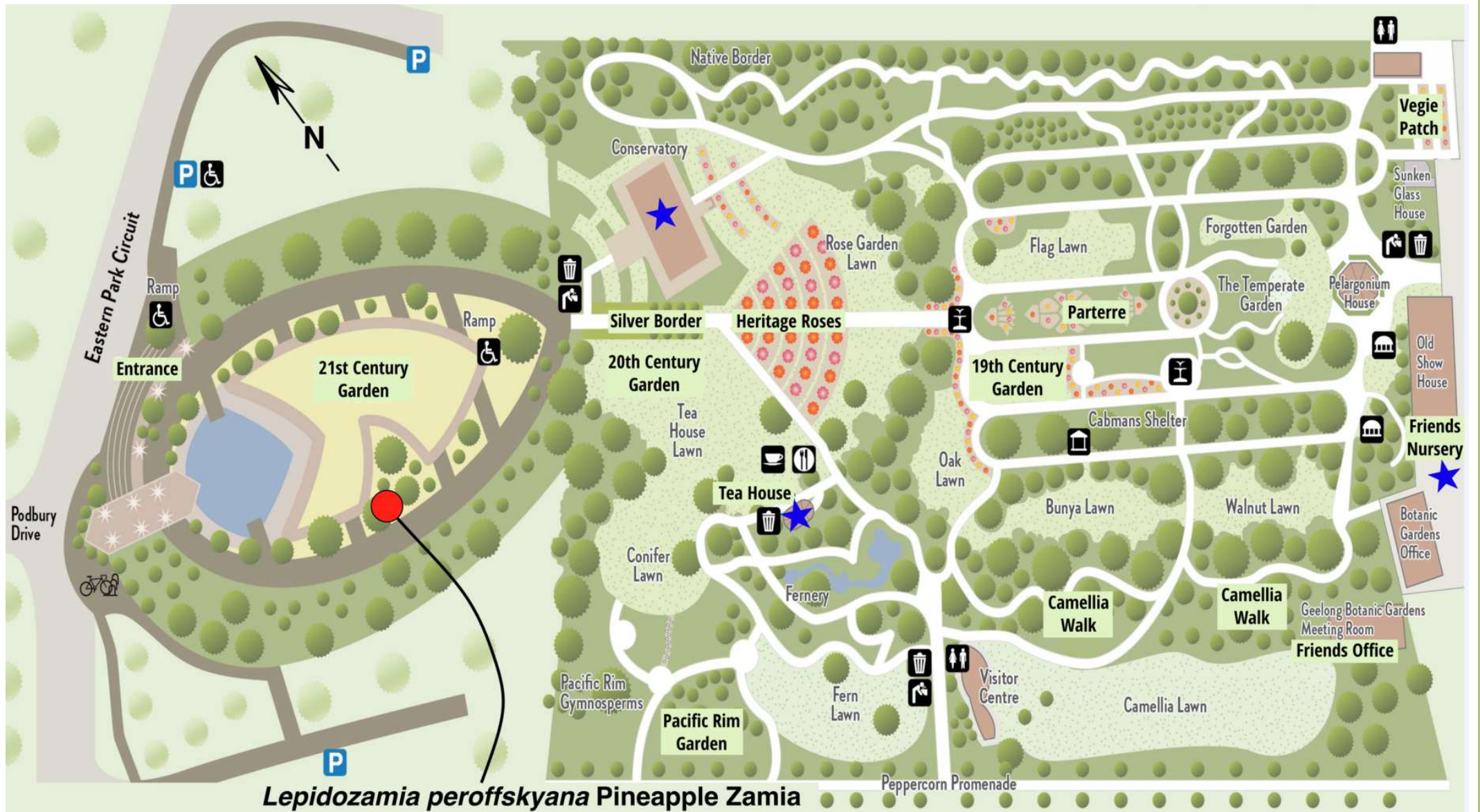
Botanic Gardens of Sydney, Cycads, <https://www.botanicgardens.org.au/our-science/our-collections/plant-families/cycads> accessed 21.12.2025

Flora of Australia, *Lepidozamia peroffskyana* Regel, website: <https://profiles.ala.org.au/opus/foa/profile/Lepidozamia%20peroffskyana> accessed 21.12.2025

PACSOA Wiki, *Lepidozamia peroffskyana* Regel website: [https://pacsoa.org.au/wiki/index.php/Lepidozamia\\_peroffskyana](https://pacsoa.org.au/wiki/index.php/Lepidozamia_peroffskyana) accessed 21.12.2025).

The Gardens Magazine Autumn 2021, Issue128, website: [https://issuu.com/foundation.friends/docs/ftog449\\_issue28-autumn-issuu/s/11771187](https://issuu.com/foundation.friends/docs/ftog449_issue28-autumn-issuu/s/11771187)

Shayla Salzman, 2025, Chemical ecology of symbioses in cycads, an ancient plant lineage, <https://nph.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/nph.70109>



Map of Geelong Botanic Gardens