



Winter Newsletter 2018



Hellebore – ‘The Winter Rose’

Winter! A time to hunker-down on a rainy day with a good book, plan the next garden project and recharge your batteries ready in anticipation of spring. As gardeners well know, there is still plenty to do in our gardens but with cold weather and shorter days, somehow the sense of urgency abates. Winter provides us with an opportunity to critically assess the “bones” of our gardens – particularly where the garden includes many deciduous trees and shrubs. But winter is not drab and boring – early jonquils can provide bright splashes of colour to compliment stunning Hellebores and Camellias together with many varieties of flowering Australian native plants. Enjoy the winter season with all its contrasts and surprises!

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Open Gardens SA Important Dates during Winter

During the Winter months OGSA takes a break from opening gardens to the public – however there are some key dates and events during this time to consider including in your diary.

June 16

Mosaic Garden Workshop,
Kensington Gardens

SOLD OUT

June 19

OGSA Annual General Meeting, Mitcham

July 15

Garden Owners Information and Thank you Day
By Invitation

August 4

Mosaic Garden Workshop,
Kensington Gardens

SOLD OUT

August 19

Spring Season Launch
By Invitation

September 23

Port Elliot Garden Day, Port Elliot, Booking Required

See further details for Event Bookings on our webpage:
<http://opengardensa.org.au/>

Meet Dan Austin at the OGSA Annual General Meeting on the 19 June 2018

Dan Austin.

Dan Austin is our guest speaker at the Open Gardens SA Annual General Meeting on the 19 June 2018.

With horticultural roots stemming from work on a family fruit block in the Riverland as a teenager Dan started out on an astonishing journey of adventure and dedication that has taken him from an apprenticeship in horticulture at Urrbrae TAFE to Tanzania and Jerusalem, the Solomon Islands and points between as a volunteer in community aid programmes, university and professional experiences and back. His career focus is now on strengthening the horticulture industry in Australia and internationally by providing quality input, strengthening networks and creating opportunities for industry growth when possible. He knows the fine detail of gardening but looks to the big picture as his future.



Among his achievements in a stellar career path are: Botanical Training Program, Centre for Australian National Biodiversity Research - CSIRO (2018); appointment to Nursery & Garden Industry SA Board of Directors (2016); Jerusalem Botanic Gardens Scholarship recipient (2015); Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce: Business Excellence Award (2013); Appointment to International Plant Propagators Society, Board of Directors

(2011); IPPS: South Africa Exchange (2009); Radio 5AA Horticultural Media Internship (2009); South Australian Apprentice of the Year 2008 (Horticulture); Playford Trust Award 2007 (Outstanding Achievement Horticulture).

With wry wit and insights informed by wide travel and a broad range of experience Dan is a very entertaining young speaker. Come to the AGM to hear his story.

The Open Gardens SA Annual General Meeting on the 19 June 2018, commencing at 6.00pm, is being held at 27 Carrick Hill Drive, Mitcham. OGSA Members welcome.



Notice is given that the Annual General Meeting of Open Gardens South Australia Inc. will be held on:

Date: Tuesday 19 June 2018
Time: 6pm – 8pm
Venue: 27 Carrick Hill Drive, Mitcham

Order of Business

- Minutes from AGM 2017
- Consideration of the Accounts
- Report from Chair of the Committee
- Election of committee members.

Guest Speaker

Dan Austin from TAFE talking about his experiences in horticulture.

Election of Committee Members

- The election of committee members will take place at the AGM on 19 June 2018.
- The Committee comprises a minimum of ten (10) people and a maximum of eighteen (18) people.
- A committee member must be a current paid up member of OGSA Inc.
- Retiring committee members are eligible to stand for re-election without nomination.
- Any other member who wishes to stand for election must be nominated by a current member of OGSA before the 21 May 2018. Both the nominee and the proposer must sign the nomination and send it by email to the Secretary at admin@opengardensa.org.au or by post to PO Box 1184 Stirling SA 5152.

Jane Knowler, Secretary Open Gardens South Australia Inc.

(This Notice was distributed to OGSA Members on 4 May 2018)

Selecting gardens to open as part of our Open Garden program

Have you even wondered how gardens are selected to open as part of our program? The gardens we open are carefully chosen because they represent the best of their kind in each region of the State.

Gardens can range from tiny inner city courtyards to large country estates. There are historic gardens, productive gardens, organic gardens, formal gardens, professionally designed gardens, Australian native plant gardens and plantsmen's gardens showcasing specialist collections. They must all have a very high level of maintenance, offer at least 30 minutes of interest to visitors and be safe and accessible. Our Garden Selectors also consider garden design strength and quality, significant plant collections, historical significance, good plantsmanship, an original or imaginative approach to the garden, and difficulties with site, soil, or climate being managed well and successfully designed.

When a potential garden is identified by OGSA one of our Garden Selectors will arrange to visit the garden and explain the selection and opening process to the garden owner. The Selector will assess the garden and make a recommendation to our Selection Committee. Should the garden be selected to open as part of OGSA, the Selector provides support and advice to the garden owner throughout the process of preparing to open.

The aim of OGSA is to provide a different and varied program every year. Accordingly, being selected to open your garden for OGSA does not mean you will automatically be asked to open again. We are fortunate that there are some outstanding gardens who are invited to be included every year, but most garden owners prefer to only open every second or third year to allow them time to undertake new projects or to simply have the time for other activities or to visit other gardens. If a garden owner would like to open more than once in a relatively short space of time, we ask them to consider a different time of year. Spring is often extremely busy, not just with OGSA openings, but with school and hospital fetes, country shows, festivals, the Annual Christmas Pageant etc.

Gardeners thinking of nominating their garden to open under the banner of OGSA need to be aware of our strong selection criteria. When a Selector assess a garden it might be determined that although the garden is good, it may need a year or two to 'mature' or there may be some recommendations to (for example) address safety or access concerns. In these circumstances the garden could be 'kept-in-mind' for a possible opening on a future date.

Our regular garden visitors like to visit new and different gardens. If a garden opens several years in a row the visitor numbers often reduce in the second and subsequent openings which can be disappointing for everyone involved.

Most gardens open on the weekends on both Saturdays and Sundays. The standard open hours are 10am to 4.30pm both days. The entry fee

to each garden is set by OGSA and is currently \$8 per adult, \$6 concession, and under 18 free. The gate takings are shared 50:50 with the Garden Owner (many who choose donate their share to charity). If you have a great garden or know of one which meets our specific criteria and very high standards, please contact us!



Meet your OGSA Committee Members – Tom Wilkinson



I am not a gardener. My wife Marg and I were very lucky to buy a lovely old 1840's home in Mitcham thirty five years ago and have been looking after the garden ever since. Our home "Gable Ends" was built by John Brown, the Immigration Officer for the

South Australia Company. He was sent up to Mitcham by Colonel Light to establish a sheep station and he built a 3 room farm cottage. In the 1860's, Reverend Playford added more substantial rooms and finished the roof with decorated gable ends.

The Playford family sold the house to Sir Edward and Lady Heywood in the 1950's and they added more modern rooms and a lovely stone and wrought iron fence and some dry stone walls. The property is on an acre and the creek from Carrick Hill runs through on its way to Brownhill Creek.

We opened the garden with the former Open Gardens Australia program and enjoyed the experience. Marg joined the OGA Committee and we were concerned when it seemed that Open Gardens may not continue. I am a Prosthodontist by trade and had set up many Incorporated Associations for different Dental Academies and volunteered for the inaugural OGSA working Committee.

Because I cannot tell the difference between an aspidistra and a pelargonium, I was given the job of setting up the OGSA web page and then establishing our database. As I also like a drink and because Marg chairs the OGSA Events Committee, I have developed an expertise in setting up the bar with the help of other bar stalwarts at OGSA functions.

It has been rewarding to see the success of OGSA over the last 3 years and I must say that this has probably been the best Committee I have worked on with people happily taking on different tasks and making it work.

Plant Profile – Growing Grapes and Running a Vineyard

By Tom Wilkinson

The Editors of this Newsletter also asked me to say a few words about my other life interest which is running a vineyard. In 2003,

my brother and I decided to re-establish a vineyard on his property at Stonyfell next to the Boral or the old Martin Family quarry. All the foothills from Magill Road across to Greenhill Road were vineyards with bush vines on horse tracks built around the contours of the hills. These made up many well-known vineyards such as Auldana (now Sky Cellars), Magill Estate and the Stonyfell Winery. Some of the old vines have survived without any care or water for the last 50 years as these foot hills have been taken over by housing.



We had an area of 3 acres on a west facing slope overlooking the city that we favoured for the new vineyard. We consulted with Penfolds and decided to plant the 1654 clone of Shiraz from rootlings prepared by the Cleggett Family at Langhorne Creek.

As we wished to grow the vines on trellises and for these to run down the hill from east to west, we had to create terraces for the steeper southern half of the vineyard. We realised that nobody had done vineyard terracing for many years but we had to find a way. My brother had used a

very senior caterpillar driver on the property for years and he assured us that he could cut the terraces by eye without any of those “new-fangled” levelling devices, and he did.

The soil profile on the vineyard was about half a metre of soil over half a metre of limestone over 1000 metres of quarry rock. We found a gentleman from Murray Bridge who used a drilling rig for every posthole and just lowered the posts into the holes without having to bang them in. We set up the vineyard with only 2.6 metres between the rows and planted 2800 vines which I all know by name.

After much hard work in training the babies up to and then along the wires, we had our first real harvest in 2005. We quickly discovered that the local Silver Eyes, Rainbow Lorikeets and even Magpies wished to share our fruit. I went out to Angle Vale and bought multiple orange mesh bags that are used for packaging oranges and tied one individually over every bunch and we did make a 2005 Shiraz. Our visiting friends from Penfolds still laugh about my obsessive orange bags.

We first sold our fruit to Penfolds in 2006 and kept a tonne to make our own wine. Each year we have gotten into their St Henri but have not yet made Grange but we live in hope. We deliver the fruit the 3 kilometres to Magill Estate in bins through the day of picking a bit like you see with small vineyards in Europe. Penfolds are kind enough to let me visit during the next week to see our fruit end up as wine in their new French or American barrels.



The yearly cycle on the vineyard starts in July with pruning. As you can see in the photo, we leave two buds on each of approximately 10 spurs along the vine. I have had the same team of pruners from McLaren Vale each year and we complete pruning over a weekend.

I slash the mid-row on my trusty Koboda 1500 tractor and spray the weeds under-vine with glyphosphate. We have bark mulch under-vine on the less vigorous parts of the vineyard. We canopy spray usually five times a season using Copper and Sulphur and one spray would include a seaweed nutrient and one a spray for Botrytis. Vineyard owners always dread the weather report of “conditions conducive to downy mildew” as it may involve further spraying. In 2017 we had Powdery Mildew in the denser part of the vineyard and I was devastated for not catching that early enough.



Though we go to a lot of effort to prevent Phylloxera again affecting vines in Australia, we have not been so successful in controlling Eutypa or “die-back”. This spore carried disease starts peripherally as seen in the photo (above) and progressively devitalises the vine. It is felt that it can enter through pruning cuts particularly if the vine is stressed. Control of the disease may involve cutting the vine off at the trunk and redeveloping new arms.



Flowering usually occurs in late October and wind and rain at that time will reduce the percentage of flower-set and may affect tonnage. Verasion usually occurs in the first week of January and sees our grapes going from green to red and the first interest of our flying friends. The photo shows the netting machine being pulled behind a tractor to cover three rows at a time.



Penfold’s head winemakers visit each vineyard in the three weeks before harvest and tell us when they wish to pick. Vintage has been getting earlier and earlier with our latest being mid-March and the earliest the 15th of February. Vintage involves removing the nets and assembling a United Nation’s team of pickers and a few of our own as seen in the photos. We start picking at first light and usually have it all off by 2pm. We have our eyes set on the weather leading up to vintage as 40 degrees Celsius makes it hard work and rain can stop picking.

My accountant describes the vineyard as a “lifestyle choice” but I love it!



Mosaic Garden Workshops 2018.

Saturday 16th June 2018, 2pm - 4pm. SOLD OUT

Saturday 4th August 2018, 2pm - 4pm. SOLD OUT.

Cost \$35 Limited to 30 Participants. Afternoon Tea will be provided.

Anne Martin will conduct a tour of mosaics in her colourful garden followed by a demonstration workshop in the garden studio. Over the years she has adapted and simplified traditional methods of making mosaics and she will pass on clever tips and useful advice which will help those attending to confidently tackle their own projects later.



Anne originally trained as a fashion designer and later was craft editor for Woman’s Day. Since the year 2000 she has applied her expertise in the use of colour to create stunning mosaics in her home from very large panels that cover entire walls to small birdbaths and bowls. To ensure she has the perfect materials

for a particular design, Anne often makes her own 3 dimensional tiles which are hand glazed and fired in vibrant colours in shapes of petals, leaves, fruit, fish or whatever is needed to create her picture.

Topiary pear trees laden with ripe yellow fruit, vines dripping with plump green grapes, pencil pines in pretty pots, flowering bird of paradise plants, birds, frogs, fish and fountains are just some of the stars of Anne Martin’s amazing colourful garden – and they are all made of mosaic!



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Plan Ahead to "Get the Look"

By Trevor Nottle

It is too risky to plant spring flowering bulbs as late as this. They will most likely be so shrivelled, if not rotten, that it is not worth the money that might be saved by purchasing end-of-season clear outs. A better plan will be to look ahead to the bulb sales season that lies ahead next January. By getting orders in as early as possible it inspires confidence that the varieties wanted will be available.



From season to season we are exposed to many images of massed bulbs, most often tulips, under planted with forget-me-nots, wall-flowers or sweet alyssum. The colour combinations

can be subtle and delicate or strong and surprising, and while they work in highly favourable locations in Australia quite often they just don't work. Things that flower together in Europe just don't Down Under so the tulips are over before the accompanist gets going.

More successful is the method adopted by David Glenn at 'Burnside' near Ascot in central Victoria. David utilises the open spaces between hibernating perennials and heavily pruned sub-shrubs such as Santolina to make mass plantings of wild tulips which are dying down as the perennials begin to shoot into growth.



Having experimented with many tulip species David has found the best performer to be *Tulipa clusiana* – the Lady Tulip; a beautiful thing with white flowers, dark blue at the base with a bold red stripe down the outside of each petal. Performance is more than just flower power and the Lady Tulip has proven to be a reliable bulb flowering year after year and slowly multiplying. They seem not to mind root competition but they resent being over-shadowed so keeping the setting open and shade free should be

the objective. The bulbs are quite small but are not delicate despite their small size. Planting them deeply will protect them from cooking in Summer and encourage the establishment of a colony. A light feed

with tomato fertiliser when the leaves first appear should be enough to keep them coming back year after year.

This winter we planted 80 Lady Tulips in a bed surrounded by a low evergreen hedge and planted with sundry Tradescantias, Anemones, irises and several shrubby wild roses. We are anticipating a fine show such as we saw in David's garden last spring. The proof is in the pictures.

Last year bulbs were available from Lambley Nursery, Vogelvry's Bulb Farm, J. N. Hancock & Co., Table Cape Bulb Farm and we found potted plants in flower from Tim Drewitt.

Aside from the Lady Tulip other kinds that could be tried are *Tulipa saxitalis* (Cretan tulip, pink), *Tulipa sylvestris* (southern France, yellow), *Tulipa kauffmaniana* (Water-lily tulip, creamy white) and *Tulipa greigii* (Rock tulip, many shades from white to pink to red).



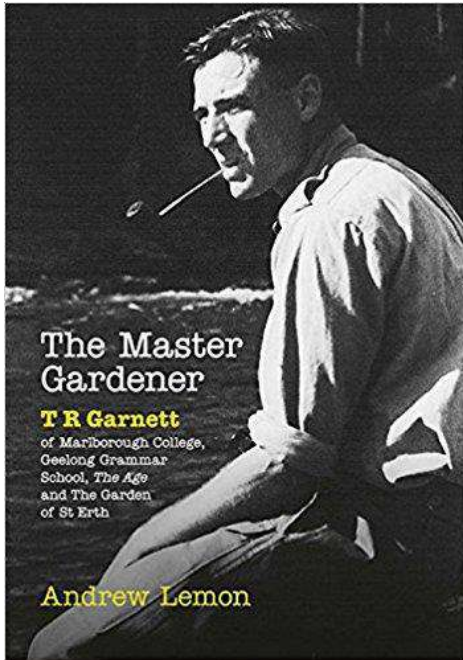
A Hot Tip from OGSA!!

If you missed the sensational Play earlier this year conducted in partnership with Blue Sky Theatre, you will be delighted to know that plans are already underway for the next *Theatre in the Garden* production. Details will be available later in the year – so watch this space!!

Book Review: THE MASTER GARDENER – A Biography of T R Garnett. By Andrew Lemon

By Trevor Nottle

Hardie Grant Books, London, 2018.



Here is the perfect book for winter reading. At 632 pages the contents will keep anyone busy for a week or so.

That this may be so is not in itself a recommendation; it is the story that counts, and what a story it is.

Meticulously researched by the author, historian Andrew Lemon, the book details the extraordinary life of Tommy Garnett, late of Castlemaine and before that Simmon's Reef via Blackwood where he and his wife kept *The Garden of St Erth*, one of Australia's most noted private gardens.

Tommy, in another life was Head Master of Geelong Grammar. The gilt-edged reputation of the school and its alumni may make gardening look pretty ordinary but that is not so and nothing like the boy's own adventure that was Tommy's life. He was very well known for his gardening columns in *The Age*, and for the garden he and Penny, his wife, made at St Erth but there is much more to T R Garnett than writing and gardening. Saying more would spoil a good read. Take my word for it this book is a rich and deeply immersive experience, one that most readers will thoroughly enjoy.

It is very pleasing to see that the pantheon of Australian gardeners is being brought up to date with Tommy's inclusion by this very extensive biography.



Australian Native Flowers – a delight in late Autumn and Winter

Winter Solstice

(*Geoscience Australia*)

The winter solstice is the day of the year that has the least daylight hours of any in the year and usually occurs on 22 June but can occur between 21 and 23 June. The summer solstice occurs once a year in December when the Sun's track across the Australian sky reaches its highest point. It is the day that has the most daylight hours of any in the year. The summer solstice usually occurs on 22 December, but can occur between 21 and 23 December.

Sunrise, sunset and daylight hours.

An interesting idiosyncrasy relating to the summer solstice is that it does not feature the day with the earliest sunrise and latest sunset as is commonly expected. Similarly, on the winter solstice, the sunrise is not the latest and the sunset is not the earliest. However, this day does have the least amount of daylight hours.

Because the path of the Earth around the Sun is an ellipse, not a circle, and because the Earth is off-centre on its axis, these combined phenomena can create up to several minutes difference between solar and mean time. Around the date of summer solstice, these effects make the Sun appear to move slightly slower than expected when measured by a watch or clock. As a result, the earliest sunrise occurs before the date of the summer solstice, and the latest sunset happens after the summer solstice. For the same reasons, around the winter solstice, the time of sunrise continues to get later in the days after the solstice.

OGSA Recommends...

We recommend you always check our website for garden opening details. The website is an up-to-date, reliable and informative site which lists each open garden with a description of the garden, address (including a map), photographs, the availability of refreshments etc. The official Garden Notes written by the garden owner are also provided which you can read in advance or print and take a copy with you for your garden visit. Importantly, our website will always list any late additions or cancellations to our garden opening program.

<http://opengardensa.org.au/>

Open Gardens SA 2018 Winter Calendar

During the Winter months OGSA takes a break from opening gardens to the public – however there are some key dates and events during this time to consider including your diary.

June

16 - Saturday ONLY – Booking Required **SOLD OUT**

Mosaic Garden Workshop, Kensington Gardens

19 - Tuesday Evening – OGSA Members Welcome

OGSA Annual General Meeting, Mitcham

July

15 - Sunday Afternoon – By Invitation

Garden Owners Information and Thank You Day

August

4 - Saturday ONLY – Booking Required **SOLD OUT**

Mosaic Garden Workshop, Kensington Gardens

19 - Sunday Afternoon – By Invitation

OGSA Season Launch

September

23 - Sunday ONLY – Booking Required

Port Elliot Garden Day, Port Elliot – Various locations.

good access to open gardens for those with less discretionary spending than others.

This season alone over \$80,000 has been returned to garden owners for distribution to their many and varied charities. A further \$60,000 was raised for charity by add-on events during the openings ... plant sales, afternoon teas, sausage sizzles and the like.

Open Gardens SA also presents a number of garden related events from smaller workshops such as the making of succulent wreaths, through to our major joint venture of *Theatre in the Garden* with Blue Sky Theatre. This year's event across January saw nearly 2,000 tickets sold across 10 performances of the farce 'School for Scandal'. Planning for a third event is well under way.

With a very strong volunteer effort, prudent management practices, and some very welcome initial sponsorship in areas such as photocopying, legal and IT services we believe that Open Gardens SA has now consolidated a firm base for the future. We are getting ourselves into a position that ensures that the opening of private gardens to the public can continue well into the future, and where we can begin to look at some assistance to garden related projects that will benefit the community. As a first step in this area OGSA, through the Playford Trust, will be providing three \$2,000 scholarships to students studying Horticulture or Conservation and Land Management.

The process of selecting gardens for the Spring 2018 and Summer / Autumn 2019 seasons is well underway.



Another Successful Season for OGSA!

With the conclusion of the Summer / Autumn openings the third season of Open Gardens SA has come to a close... a season in which over 40 private gardens were open to the public, well over half of them for the first time. Since our inaugural season in 2015 – 2016, after the demise of the national scheme, there has been fantastic support from garden owners and the public with just over 68,000 visits across the three seasons.

Many of those visitors have taken advantage of the concession entry price that has been offered since our first season. This has helped maintain

Sharing a few photos our Autumn Season of Open Gardens...



Brae Gairden, Strathalbyn



Jan's Garden, Hahndorf



Trevelyan Street Garden, Wayville



Serenity, Strathalbyn



Casuarina, Mylor



Frosty Flats, Birdwood

OLD GOVERNMENT HOUSE GRAPE JAM

*The National Trust of Australia
(NSW Branch)*

Grapes (Isabellas are excellent for this jam)
Water and Sugar

Stem and wash grapes. Press pulp from skin. Place the pulp in a pan and cook till tender. Rub through a sieve to remove the grape seeds. Cook the skins in just enough water to cover. Combine the two and boil for five minutes. Cool. Measure, and allow one cup of sugar to two cups of grape pulp. Boil quickly until the jam is thick. Bottle and seal in sterilised jars.



Cyclamens

Reproduced from a 2015 Garden Blog by Trevor Nottle

Most gardeners would know cyclamen by sight. They are certainly the plants of cooling, shorter days and cold nights. For more than a century the large hybrid cyclamen have been very popular as pot plants. The principal hybridists were, and remain some of the big greenhouse nurseries of the Netherlands, Germany, England and to a lesser extent the USA. While it is possible to keep them going from year to year flower production declines after the big displays produced by two and three year old tubers and many people throw them away after the flowers have finished.



These plants are all descendants of a wild plant, *Cyclamen persicum*, which naturally inhabits parts of Turkey, Iran and Iraq. There are many other wild cyclamen too and these are perfect for gardeners with very limited space. One of the most widely available is *Cyclamen hederifolium*, sometimes called the Neapolitan cyclamen as it is found growing in the hills around that city. Indeed, seed of it was brought to Australia by emigrants after WW2 and grown in their gardens.

Cyclamen hederifolium is available in many different forms. Flowers can be pink, white or a dark rose pink, which is euphemistically called 'red' by nurseries and seedsmen. Leaf shapes vary from those resembling ivy leaves to long-narrow forms described as 'arrow-head' kinds. Keen collectors have introduced numerous named selections but these are not usually available but for the offerings of specialist nurseries.

These small cyclamen are excellent and long-lived pot plants. It is not unusual for them to attain twenty years of age, by which time the black tubers can be the size of dinner plates and producing hundreds of flowers. Some kinds are scented too. Each plant that flowers should produce seeds afterwards and if left to its own

devices the plant will shed the seed and given time it will germinate in the pots around the edge of the mother plant.

Plants enjoy a bright position but not direct sunshine during the heat of Summer when the tubers are dormant.

Flowering frequently begins in late Summer reaching a peak around early May so the season is quite long. The variable leaf forms and colours keeps the interest going for a month or so either side of the flowering period.

Care is simple: leave them alone but for applications of diluted soluble fertiliser.

Some people re-pot every year and some do not. The bulbs seem indifferent to either human activity. There are no pests to worry about though slugs and snails can cause leaf damage. Slugs and small snails can live in the drainage holes at the bottom of pots.



Open Gardens SA Seasonal Program

*Our 2018/2019 Winter /
Spring Season will be posted
on the Website at the end of
July 2018.*

<http://opengardensa.org.au/>

*Our aim is to promote the
enjoyment, knowledge, and
benefits of gardens and
gardening in the South
Australian community, and
to build strong public support
for the development of
gardens across the state.*



Open Gardens South Australia is a not for profit organisation
opening private gardens to the general public.

The purpose of Open Gardens SA is to educate and promote the enjoyment, knowledge
and benefits of gardens and gardening in South Australia and to build strong public
support for the development of gardens.

Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening.

Our mailing address is:

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Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/opengardensa/?hl=en>

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