



Summer Newsletter 2018



Sunflowers

The Open Gardens SA Committee would like to wish you, your family, and loved ones a very Happy Christmas.

Summer has arrived with clear blue skies and our typical hot, dry summer days. Open Gardens SA is enjoying a brief break during December and over Christmas so we will be ready to embrace the New Year! There is much to be excited about with our garden program – not to mention the fabulous Theatre in the Garden *'The School for Scandal'* in association with Blue Sky Theatre. Tickets are selling fast – don't miss out!

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Preview of our Open Garden Program for Summer and Early Autumn 2018

January 12 – February 3
Theatre in the Garden

January 20-21
The Good Life Garden,
Prospect

February 3-4
John's Organic Garden, Victor Harbor

February 10-11
Joe's Connected Garden,
Elizabeth Grove

February 17-18
Hector's Patch, Mile End

February 24-25
The Mile End Village Garden,
Mile End

March 10-11
Frosty Flats, Birdwood

March 24-25
Trevelyan Street Garden,
Wayville

Our Summer and Autumn program is currently being assembled. Please visit our website for further open garden listings as they are added to our program:

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

Theatre in the Garden 12 January – 3 February 2018 - *The School for Scandal*

Tickets are selling fast!!

Blue Sky Theatre and Open Gardens SA are bringing another hilarious, fast paced comedy to gardens across South Australia. No-one escapes the gossips in this new take on Sheridan's famous fast-paced comedy.

In a society awash with gossip, Lady Sneerwell and every other tittle-tattle in London ruin the reputations of their rich friends simply for the fun of it. Among the targets are two brothers: Charles, a loveable rogue and Joseph a two-faced MP. While they compete to win Maria's heart, they're unaware their wealthy uncle is secretly testing them to see who deserves his inheritance.



Let us take you back to summer 1955 for Pimms, picnics and plenty of intrigue in four glorious garden settings under the stars.

The School for Scandal will be staged at gardens in:

Victor Harbor on 12, 13 and 14 January

Mount Pleasant on 20 and 21 January

Carrick Hill on 26 January (Australia Day), 27 and 28 January

Stangate House on 2 and 3 February.

Tickets are \$35 and picnic hampers are \$13.

All shows start at 6.30pm and finish just after 9.00pm. Gates open at 4.30pm. The bar is open, you can look around the garden prior to the show and have your picnic. At Carrick Hill you will be able to book for pre-theatre dinner and purchase discount tickets into the house and the Arthur Streeton 'Blue and Gold' Exhibition.

Last season sold out so book early!

Visit our website to book your tickets
<http://opengardensa.org.au/events>

Bar available. Pre-book picnic boxes.

There is a licensed bar selling Howard's vinyard red, white, rose and sparkling wine, Pimms, Cooper's beer and Bickford's soft drinks. NO BYO ALCOHOL PLEASE. You are welcome to bring

your own picnic or buy one of ours when you book. Our picnic box contains bread, nibbles, olives and much more for \$13 per person. While the picnic is suitable for vegetarians, due to the nature of the event we cannot cater for other dietary requirements. If in doubt, bring your own!

Access

Parking is free. Details are provided with your tickets. As we are often performing in private gardens we cannot always guarantee good access if you have limited mobility. We will provide a drop off zone at all venues where possible. **If in doubt, give us a call on 0427 404 924.**



Follow OGSA on Facebook and Instagram



And don't forget to visit our Website! The OGSA Website provides a wealth of information – not only is it the 'go-to' site for all the information about the gardens we open to the public, but it also provides up-to-date News items relating to our activities, notices of Special Events, information about Committee Members, and so much more. Be sure to also check-out the highly recommended gardening Blog for interesting articles and insights relating to gardening in SA.

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



Christmas Reading – Gift Ideas for Gardeners

By Trevor Nottle

Having looked around in good bookshops, and read Christmas reading guides, I can only conclude there are almost no new gardening books for sale. In contrast with cookery and food books the numbers are dismal and hard to understand. The most attractive books are books of photographs by photographers, so while the images are glorious the textual content is weak, generalised and often inappropriate for conditions in Australia unless you garden on Mount Wellington, Tasmania. Acres of Blue Tibetan Poppies are not going to thrive anywhere else in the country, any more than *Cardiocrinum giganteum* will flourish at Wilpena Pound.

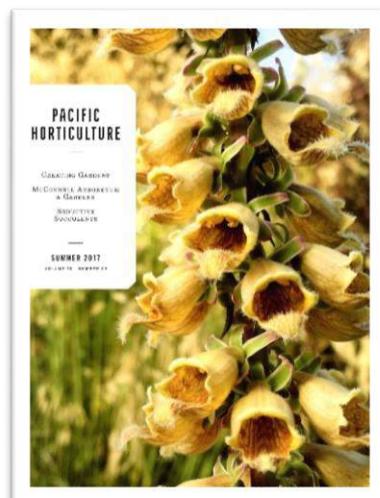
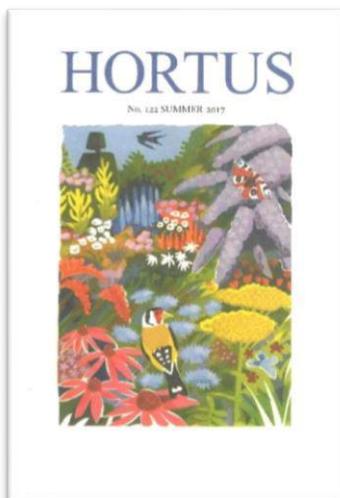
So may I recommend instead for gift giving to garden lovers you think about purchasing a subscription to a serial publication that specialises in gardening and garden related subjects? Two that I find good value are: HORTUS (www.hortus.co.uk) and PACIFIC HORTICULTURE (www.pacifichorticulture.org). Each is issued quarterly thus extending reading interest all year long. HORTUS takes an international view with some emphasis on the UK and Europe while PACIFIC HORTICULTURE focusses mainly on the west coast states of the USA with occasional articles from further afield.

“May the wonderful feelings of Christmas stay with you long after the gifts are unwrapped, the tree is taken down, and the ornaments are stored safely away.

May the once-a-year joy of Christmas return to you in memories throughout the year, each time tugging at your heartstrings....and each time bringing a smile.”



(Author unknown.)



Protocols When Visiting Private Gardens

The gardens we open under the banner of Open Gardens SA are nearly all privately owned gardens not usually accessible to the general public. It is important for visitors to respect the privilege of being allowed access by our garden owners, and to assist we have developed a Protocol for visiting these gardens. To retain the goodwill of owners who open their gardens under the banner of OGSA, we ask visitors to please observe these courtesies.

Open Days: Gardens are only open on the dates specified.

Privacy of the Garden Opener: Remember that you are visiting private property so please do not enter the house unless invited to do so. On the rare occasions when both the house and garden are open to visitors, these details are given in the garden promotion.

Etiquette in the garden: Please do not remove any part of any plant from the garden. To identify a plant, take the person to the plant, not the plant to the person. Keep to paths to avoid trampling on plants. Please ensure you take away with you anything you brought into the garden and please do not litter. Please don't create or encourage loud noise in the garden.

Children: While we enthusiastically encourage children to visit our open gardens, please ensure children are well supervised, particularly in gardens with water features, and that their behaviour does not distract from the quality of the experience of other visitors.

Dogs: No dogs (except Guide and Assistance dogs) are permitted in the gardens unless the 'dogs on leash permitted' icon is shown. If dogs are permitted, they must be on a leash and be under the control of the owner at all times. If the Garden Owner does not permit dogs, a 'no dogs' icon will be shown in the garden listing.

Car Parking: Please park your car so that others can enter and leave the parking area without inconvenience and please don't park where your car will damage the garden or its surroundings.

Photography: Most garden owners are delighted that visitors want to take photos, but please ask permission first. Photographs taken in the garden cannot be used for commercial purposes without prior permission of the garden owner.

Icons: Each garden listing on our website includes relevant icons for the gardens. For example, gardens suitable for wheelchairs, or gardens with toilet facilities will display the relevant icons.



Garden Entry Fee

Thanks to our success to date, the Committee has been able to maintain an affordable entry fee and the cost of visiting our gardens has not increased since our first open season. Indeed, we have been able to introduce concessions to reduce the cost of visiting our open gardens.

OGSA is a not-for-profit Association and retains half of the entry fee to cover organisational costs. Garden Owners receive the other half of the entry fee but may choose to donate all or part of their percentage of the gate fee to their chosen charity.

Our garden owners are very generous in not only allowing visitors into their gardens but also donating considerable funds to many worthy causes.

The standard entry fee to our gardens, set by the Committee, is \$8 per adult, \$6 concession, on presentation of an Eligible Commonwealth Government concession card (the *Pensioner Concession Card* and the *Health Care Card*, but not a *Seniors Card*). The concession is also available on presentation of a TAFE Horticultural Tertiary student concession card.

Children under 18 are admitted free.

OGSA Members, including current season Garden Owners are eligible for the \$6 concession on presentation of their Membership card.

OGSA Committee Representatives including our Selectors, receive free entry.

Plant Profile – Hosta

By Trevor Nottle (Photos: Trevor Nottle)

Hosta (Trattinick, 1812)



A genus of plants grown almost solely for their decorative foliage, though the petioles of a few species are used as stir-fried vegetables in Asia. Originating in damp to wet, and shady habitats in Japan and China the plants have spread as cultivated plants into Europe, the British Isles and North America before being taken to New Zealand and Australia. The first plants arrived in France from China before 1784 but they were known to botanists before then due to the notes and descriptions made by Engelbert Kaempher (1651-1716), Carl Thunberg (1743-1828) and Philipp Franz Balthasar von Siebold (1796-1866) who all worked at various times for the Dutch East India Company at their trading post on Deshima Island in Nagasaki harbour. Their stories and adventurous lives are worth reading but not here.

Gradually more plants were introduced by seed collected in the field and by a few live plants sent from trading posts in China and Japan. Interest grew steadily for the genus among horticulturalists and gardeners but it was not until after WW 2 that their popularity ballooned, particularly on the east coast of the USA where there was a boom in breeding and propagating to meet the demand of the landscape industry there. New Zealand, being rather wetter in most parts than Australia, was first in this part of the world to pick up on the growing interest of gardeners and designers.

Altogether there are many thousands of hybrids registered with the American Hosta Society; quite possibly too many are so similar as to be scarcely discernible from each other. Fortunately the number available in Australia is restricted by the costs of quarantine and limited scope for growing them well to around 300 cultivars. And that is quite enough.

Hostas are quite striking plants with broad leaves that are sometimes huge (up to 30cm or more) and sometimes very small (7cm or less) and they can be variegated with white, cream or yellow against background hues of silver, grey, blue, green, dark green and chartreuse. The flowers are generally white, blue or purple bells arranged on a spike.

All hostas are deciduous in winter and need damp soil and watering in summer. This makes them ideal for pot culture in shady situations. The light requirements vary from high dappled shade to quite dense shade so there is a bit of moving about to do to find the situation where individual varieties perform best. Apart from watering and shade pot grown hostas need fertilising regularly to keep them in tip top condition. And tip top condition is the only way to grow them as it is their good looks which recommends them to gardeners.



Hostas have few pests. Slugs and snails can wreak havoc quickly and must be dealt with as soon as new growth spears show above ground in spring. Apart from these the greatest threat comes from hail storms which can tear the leaves to shreds, leaving damage that lasts all summer.



Standard potting mix suits them well enough but as the hostas will be left to multiply over 3-5 years it is as well to add granules of slow release fertiliser to the mix. While hostas need damp soils they can rot from the crowns if they are water-logged so ensuring good drainage is

essential, especially in winter when the plants are dormant.

Aside from all the challenges of position and protection hostas are definitely recommended to adventurous gardeners with a penchant for creating distinctive displays. There are no better plants for growing in shady positions, especially where they can be teamed up with hardy ferns, epimediums, lilliums and polygonatums – all great candidates for large pots in shady places.

Hostas have a creeping stoloniferous root system; most often these are very compact but potted plants must have room to expand especially if they are to be left to grow for some years.

Display being the prime reason for growing hostas never scrimp when it comes to purchasing stylish pots in which to plant them. Design skills are not a pre-requisite but the best displays are those that are not a muddle of colours, or a clash of



shapes and which have some linking feature. We chose to reflect the Asian origins of the plants. While we bought some blue and white ‘Chinese’ pots (made in Vietnam) from cheap import outlets we also scoured road-side hard waste prior to collection and retrieved several terracotta pots with Chinese motifs and others which were glazed plain dark blue. These served as the basis for our display of hostas which are on show by our back door and under a nearby holly tree. In other settings we have placed them on a pool deck and by the front door. They look great from early November until early May. Spruced up for a bit of extra ‘glam’ by the addition of red poinsettias, or Oriental lilies in flower the whole assembly will give good colour for Christmas parties and New Year’s Eve.

Overseas garden magazines and design manuals extol the butter yellow shades hosta leaves develop in autumn. In my experience these last a day or two before the leaves collapse and are hardly worth bothering to keep. Plants with ratty, browned leaves by mid-April can have to whole lot cut away with no deleterious effects on the plants ability to bounce back with strong growth next spring.

To find hostas in leaf, check out the ‘Shade’ section of any good nursery from spring onwards. The plants will be small but grown on for a few years will soon exert a stunning impact. Plants can also be found on-line at one of several specialist nursery sites.



‘Get The Look’ – Planting To Cover A Difficult Rock-Face

By Trevor Nottle (Photos: Jenny Bruse)



Transform an ugly rock-face caused by excavating to make a building site, by planting at the top and bottom with hardy trailing succulents such as sedum, crassula and various small kinds of pig-face – Messembryanthemum, Drosanthemum and others.

The situation, whether in light or shade, is quite difficult; there is little or no soil in which roots can take hold, and there is nothing which

holds water. To overcome these difficulties set up a trickler type irrigation line at the top of the rock-face, and at the bottom install a mini-spray. Using these for the first few years will be a real help in getting plantings established – even succulents need some water when they are growing. There is, at least, no need to fertilise.



Plant as densely as possible remembering that all these plants can be easily propagated by short cuttings so any bought-in plants can be broken up and planted directly into the nooks and crannies in the rock-face where you hope to achieve cover.

These plants also have the habit of rooting from every leaf node should the stems touch the soil, so it is possible to lay out trails of stems and by pinning them to the rock face encourage them to take root. Until the new root system is established it is a good idea to keep the trails stable and in place with a few small rocks placed here and there along the length of stem, or they can be held in place with big hair-pins.

Solid sheets of cover will take a few years to achieve but given the difficulty of growing anything at all on such barren sites it is worth the effort of weeding from time to time and watering from top and bottom once a month. Once things settle in and spread it should be possible to turn off the watering systems and get by on rainfall alone.



Gardenalia – Mistletoe Hooks

By Trevor Nottle (Photos: Trevor Nottle)



Way back in the Middle Ages when Christmas came around peasants anxious to make a few pennies for spending to celebrate the season had few options considering that manorial rights meant that the Lord of the Manor owned almost everything but wayside weeds and the rain that

fell from the sky. One of the few things that could be gathered for free was mistletoe. So peasant families would cut it from trees, mostly oaks, and hawk it in Christmas markets. In doing so they

also cleaned the trees of a significant parasite that could impede the growth of the all-important trees. Oak was the major construction material used for houses, roof rafters and for ship-building. Trade, commerce, transport, defence and warfare all used huge amounts of oak.



The earliest forms of hook used to cut down and extract mistletoe from the branches of oaks and other timber trees were simply adapted sickles with the soffit forged to accept a long ash handle at such an angle that made repetitive use as comfortable as possible.

Later examples of mistletoe hooks were designed specifically for the task. A broad sharp edged chisel form was forged with a recurved hook on one side. This allowed the harvester to push up into the base of the parasitic growth to sever it from the tree branch and with the hook bring it out of the crown of the tree and down to earth.

Mistletoe hooks are quite rare objects and keenly sought by collectors of 'Gardenalia'. Antique dealers in France or the UK who specialise in old garden tools sometimes have one or two for sale. Check out www.gardenandwood.co.uk

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/>

OGSA 2018 Summer / Early Autumn Calendar

Our Summer and Autumn program is currently being assembled. Please visit our website for further open garden listings as they are added to our program:

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

Garden Entry Fee \$8 per Adult, \$6 Concessions available, Under 18 free.

January

12 January – 3 February

Theatre in the Garden, Various locations: Crozier Hill, Victor Harbor; Rosebank, Mount Pleasant; Carrick Hill, Springfield; Stangate House, Aldgate

20 - 21

The Good Life Garden, 19 Arthur Street, Prospect

February – Productive Garden Month

3 - 4

John's Organic Garden, 4 Brand Avenue, Victor Harbor

10 - 11

Joe's Connected Garden, 6 Argent Street, Elizabeth Grove

17 - 18

Hector's Patch, Mile End, 35A King Street, Mile End

24 - 25

The Mile End Village Garden, 16 Goodenough Street, Mile End

March

10 - 11

Frosty Flats, 2891 Onkaparinga Valley Road, Birdwood

24 - 25

Trevelyan Street Garden, 38 Trevelyan Street, Wayville



Theatre in the Garden



The Good Life Garden, Prospect



*Joe's Connected Garden,
Elizabeth Grove*



Hector's Patch, Mile End



Frosty Flats, Birdwood



*Trevelyan Street Garden,
Wayville*

Meet your OGSA Committee Members – Di Michalk

I am delighted to be a committee member of Open Gardens SA, having joined the committee when it formed in 2015.



My working life has been office based administrative work, however in my personal time I am passionate about gardens and photography. I have a wealth of experience in preparing and opening gardens as I have been opening my own garden, *Ashgrove Iris Garden*, annually since 2000.

My love of gardens and gardening started at an early age – as a young child I spent lots of time with my Grandmother, and she was an avid gardener. I think I inherited my ‘gardening gene’ from this wonderful lady! My passion for gardening was acknowledged by being named as the ABC Gardening Australia’s ‘*Gardener of the Year, 2013*’.

As a keen amateur photographer, I also love visiting our gardens and taking photos to assist in promoting these beautiful gardens.

Amongst my tasks on the committee I co-ordinate and maintain a number of our garden opening documents including the *Garden Owner Information Package*, the *Finance and Banking Instructions* and our *Selectors Kit*, all designed to assist our garden owners with preparations for their open days. I recently became co-editor (with Trevor Nottle) of the OGSA Newsletters, which have been revamped from our spring 2017 edition. My extensive experience in administrative work and proof reading skills are a distinct asset by which I am able to contribute to the work of the committee.

I believe it is a privilege to be on the OGSA Committee comprising such a hardworking and enthusiastic team - A privilege I truly appreciate and enjoy.

Successful Succulent Wreath Workshop

Open Gardens SA hosted a Succulent Wreath Workshop on Saturday 12 August 2017. The popularity of these workshops is clear as tickets to this event were Sold Out!



Participants enjoyed a fun filled and informative day creating their own wreath using interesting, colourful and hardy succulents. All proudly went home with a completed wreath.

Committee member Marg Wilkinson conducted the workshop with the workshop fee including basic supplies and participants bringing plants for their creations, or purchasing succulents available on the day.

The 30 participants were greeted on arrival with tea and coffee and a tasty slice. A warming lunch of home-made soup, followed by delicious home-made cake was also provided.



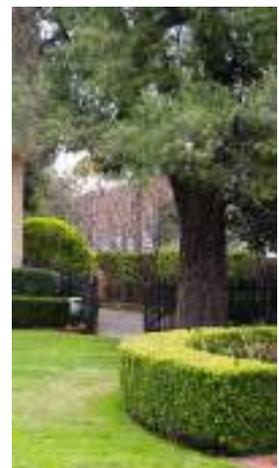
The popularity of these workshops is undeniable, and Open Gardens SA will be hosting another workshop – anticipated to be on Saturday 7 April 2018. Keep a watch on our website early in 2018 for venue and cost details of the next Succulent Wreath Workshop!

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



OGSA Season Launch – Sharing Some Photos!

The 2017–2018 Season Launch of Open Gardens SA was held on the afternoon of Sunday 20 August 2017. And although this event was some months ago, we thought you might enjoy seeing some of the photos! Held in the manicured gardens of *‘Dover House’*, invited guests enjoyed the company of fellow keen gardeners and OGSA Members. Dr Lucy Sutherland, Director of the Botanic Gardens, officially launched our new season and provided an interesting insight into her career path. Dave Simms shared information regarding the next Theatre in the Garden event *‘The School for Scandal’* being held in partnership between Blue Sky Theatre and OGSA early in 2018. The Events Committee ladies served the famous OGSA chicken sandwiches along with tasty hot sausage rolls and quiche slice. The afternoon was a bit chilly with the temperature hovering around just 13°C, and thankfully the rain held off ensuring our guests had an enjoyable afternoon.





Trevor Nottle's Hostas displayed in blue and white 'Chinese' style pots (Photo: Di Michalk)





The Committee of Open Gardens SA wish you and your loved ones a safe and Happy Christmas.

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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