



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

# Open Gardens South Australia

## Welcomes you to

# TARONGA

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2017      2 Waverley Ridge Road, Stirling

**Welcome**, my husband, William and I love living here and are delighted to share our one and a half acres of garden with you. We have been custodians of this rocky, North facing hillside property for over 45 years the property has had only three owners in around 90 years.

“Taronga” (means “a place with a beautiful view”) has been a fantastic garden for us, our children, dogs and cats.

“Taronga” is a garden with magical hideaways, wide accessible garden beds and open areas with interesting vistas and intimate places to enjoy the complex layers of mainly exotic growth.

We really appreciate the more than 50 shades of green, and love the dramatic seasonal changes. From most rooms in the house we can enjoy viewing our ever changing garden. On our arrival, there were many tall Radiata Pines, taller Stringy Barks, an understory of over 60 Camellias, assorted shrubs and some ground cover. The remnant soil was very meagre and lacking in organic matter. We have added masses of mulch, compost and some soil and many paths and walls. The garden is sparsely automatically watered by a bore every day during the dry times, deep watering is not practical, we mulch heavily to trap the water and hold our precious top soil from heading down the hill. We try to recycle all our garden waste either as mulch or composted on a large compost pile. Generally the Insects are left to balance out their life cycles, virtually no pesticides are used, mainly Eco Oil. Exception this year lots of slug and snail baits were necessary as these guys have been rampaging everywhere. Until very recently the garden has been solely maintained by my husband and myself. Three years ago I was fortunate to find a wonderful retired farmer to help me in the garden, unfortunately he is no longer with us, we really miss his assistance, now it is back to us.

The splashes of colour provided by the many flowering annual and perennial plants are a bonus. There are large numbers of small and large birds, Koalas and rapacious Possums sharing the space and bounty.

The informal structure allows for relatively easy maintenance. Feel free to explore the many hidden nooks leading into shaded spaces, full of Clivias, Ferns, Camellia, and shade loving plants. There are many aromatic plants to feel and smell.

The raised vegetable beds occupy one of the few sunny spots and are about 3 years old. We grow garlic, spring onions, assorted greens, berries, herbs, especially fruit and vegetables that tend to be more expensive to buy and taste better straight from the garden. Plenty of edible flowers to attract bees and hopefully distract unwanted insects. The citrus are struggling to establish near the established trees and shrubs. You may notice herbs, flowers, fruit trees and vegetables growing around the garden trying to catch the sunshine, there are so many tall trees and mature shrubs greedily blocking the sun.

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**Open Gardens South Australia Inc:** 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.

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

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Shade lovers such as Hellebores, Clivias, Hydrangeas, Fatsias and Ferns thrive under the shady canopy. Quite a few Bromeliads have adapted to outdoor Hills life, as have the Lady Finger Bananas. The upper deck is unavailable to you this week end, provides fascinating views for us. We grow many herbs, micro greens, strawberries and colourful flowers year round in the planter boxes at our back door.

You may find a large Kentia Palm it has been in my family for 60 plus years. There is a large unnamed tree fern near the main gate, hopefully one of our visitors may identify it for us. It was a small seedling gift and came from around Seymour, Victoria. We love our huge Stringy Barks, the largest and oldest has been home to bees as long as we can remember. You may question the wild combinations of plants. I am a strong advocate for rambling, mixed plantings. Also many plants are gifts from gardening friends reminding us of the strong bonds formed by sharing our love of gardening. The many ground covers make for relatively weed free gardens. In recent years I discovered Liliiums grow well here, I have planted hundreds and we enjoy fantastic displays of colourful flowers for many months.

The large lawn provides a foil for the house and a fantastic summer refuge in the hot weather. "Taronga" gives us much joy and most days there are changes for us to see and relish nature's bounty. You may see the gardening trends reflected in the plant choices and marvel at the longevity of many of shrubs and trees. I look at my planting lists over the years and am amazed at the many choices that were short lived or totally unsuitable to this site yet others have thrived. We gardeners never stop learning and enjoying the challenge that a garden brings to us. Hopefully, you have fallen in love with some of our plants and will take up the challenge to grow them for your enjoyment.

**Enjoy,** thank you for visiting.

**Hazel Bickford**

Open Gardens South Australia is aiming to significantly reduce its impact on the environment and we hope you support us in this endeavour. Please return your garden notes as you leave so they can be reused and recycled.

The gardens that open for us are chosen to reflect a great diversity of styles and may even challenge the conventional view of what constitutes a garden. While aspects of a garden may not be to your taste, we urge you to celebrate this diversity. Please remember you are visiting a private home and show respect and sensitivity for the owners who have so generously shared their garden with you. Thank you.