



# Spring Newsletter 2017



*Crabapple Blossom.*

Welcome to our new look Newsletter. Spring is just a few weeks away and so is the exciting new season of Open Gardens SA. Our spectacular gardens are privately owned gardens not usually open to the public. The hard work and generosity of the garden owners in allowing the public to visit is much admired and greatly appreciated. With our new season comes the special opportunity to visit these gardens and be inspired, amazed, motivated, or simply take some time to relax in a beautiful garden!

## *Inside this Issue:*

- Season Launch – 20 August 2017
- Giving back to our community
- Great results from our 2016 - 2017 season
- A Brief History of Open Gardens in South Australia
- Plant Profile – The Magnificent Magnolia!
- Garden Owner Information Function
- Never Underestimate the Value of a Good Photograph
- Book Review “MY LIFE WITH PLANTS”
- Spring 2017 program of Open Gardens SA
- Meet your OGSA Committee Members
- Special Event – Theatre in the Garden.
- More News...and the sad passing of a gardening friend.

## Early Spring Open Gardens

### **August 27**

Etre Garden, Willunga  
(Sunday only Winter opening)

### **September 2–3**

Avondale, Rhynie, near  
Riverton

### **September 9–10**

Brightview, Blackwood

### **September 16–17**

Riverline, Loxton

### **September 30 – 1-2 October**

Avondale, Rhynie  
Estella, Myrtle Bank  
(Saturday, Sunday & Monday  
opening)

### **October 1-2**

Al-Ru Farm, One Tree Hill  
(Sunday & Monday opening)

### **October 7-8**

Crabapple Cottage, Leabrook

### **October 14-15**

Tickletank, Mount Barker

### **October 15 (Sunday Only)**

Marybank, Rostrevor  
Taringa Park, Middleton

See the full program on pages  
8 and 9 and on our webpage:

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

## OGSA Season Launch – Sunday 20 August

The official Launch for the 2017 - 2018 Season of Open Gardens in South Australia is on Sunday 20 August 2017, at the historic property 'Dover House', Kensington Gardens. Garden owners, OGSA Members and special guests have been invited to join us for the exciting Season Launch. We are delighted that the Director of the Botanic Gardens, Dr Lucy Sutherland has agreed to be our guest speaker and officially launch our new season.

An internationally-renowned leader in plant conservation, education and botanical gardens, Dr Sutherland has taken over the reins of the Botanic Gardens of South Australia. Dr Sutherland is the first female Director of the Botanic Gardens of South Australia in its 160 year history.

Dr Sutherland was previously the National Coordinator of the Australian Seed Bank Partnership, Acting Director at Australian National Botanic Gardens (Canberra) in 2015 - 2016, and lectured in the UK for several years in related fields.

OGSA would also like to offer a special thank-you for the generosity of the current owners of 'Dover House' in allowing us to share their lovely gardens for our 2017 - 2018 Season Launch.



### Dover House

*Mignon Weston standing by the fountain in the garden of 'Dover House', Kensington Gardens. The house was owned by Arthur and Frances S. Walker. Photo from Approx., 1910. State Library of South Australia (b2080982).*

## Giving back to our Community

The Open Gardens SA gardening community is a great contributor to charities and is a real credit to South Australia. Our garden owners are enormously generous to their charities and the OGSA committee all want to continue this tradition of philanthropy throughout the organisation.

This year Open Gardens SA has identified the opportunity to give a once off gardening grant of \$10,000 to a group in Adelaide's CBD which provides nutritious meals to homeless men. It's an amazing program run by a group of highly dedicated people. This money will be put to good use in running their highly productive gardens. We are delighted to be able to assist their work by providing this donation – made possible through our ongoing success and the support of our garden owners and the visiting public.

## Open Gardens SA has a very clear mission

*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.*

### Results from 2016 - 2017 Season

Your Committee is very happy to report the fantastic results from the previous season of Open Gardens South Australia. We were able to offer over 60 private gardens for the public to visit. In excess of 25,000 people visited these stunning gardens – and often enjoyed the added pleasure of a Devonshire Tea or light lunch while visiting. This activity assisted in raising approx., \$94,000 generously donated to a wide range of charities through the garden owner percentage of our gate fees. An additional \$58,000 was raised for charity by garden owners hosting extra activities like morning teas, plant stalls and produce sales. A highly successful season we can all be very proud of!

In addition to the open gardens we were involved with an array of special events ranging from the highly successful *Theatre in the Garden – Sense and Sensibility* (in association with Blue Sky Theatre), to the educational Preserving and Composting Workshop hosted by Kate and Alistair Punshon in their productive garden and orchard at Strathalbyn. We look forward to another fantastic season for open gardens 2017 – 2018!

## A Brief History of Open Gardens in South Australia.

South Australia was the first state in Australia to offer an open gardens program with a partnership between the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide and the Advertiser in April 1986. The pilot program featured seven gardens during the autumn of 1986, with the first garden open being Beechwood in Stirling which was then owned by the Botanic Gardens. Dr Chris Laurie, who was at that time chairman of the board of the Botanic Gardens, opened his own century old garden Panmure in Stirling along with Grove Hill at Norton Summit, the Fountain garden at Clarence Park, the Golder garden at Meadows, the Smith garden at Flagstaff Hill and Paradean at Sandilands on the Yorke Peninsula. A further fifty gardens were open during the following spring and this program continued until 1992 when South Australia was invited to join Australia's Open Garden Scheme.

Australia's Open Garden Scheme was based on the British National Gardens Scheme which was founded in 1927 to raise funds for the District Nursing Service. By 1931 over 1000 private gardens were open and a guidebook published known as "*The Yellow Book*" because of its bright cover.

Victoria started its programme of open gardens in Spring 1987, followed by the Southern Highlands of NSW in 1991 and discussions followed with SA, Tasmania and the ACT. And so the idea of a national garden scheme was born. Australia's Open Garden Scheme Limited, a not for profit company was formed on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1992. Mrs Tamie Fraser, an original participating garden owner, was elected the inaugural president and Mr Neil Robertson was appointed the first Chief Executive Officer.

By August 1993, 600 gardens were opening throughout NSW, the ACT, South-Eastern Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria. With the inclusion of Western Australia, the Northern Territory and North Queensland by 2000 the Scheme was operating right across Australia, annually attracting around 250,000 adult visitors, with additional tens of thousands of young visitors under 18 admitted free.

The organisation was renamed Open Gardens Australia in June 2011 but closed its doors in June 2015 due to financial issues. Over the years the garden owners of Australia have contributed millions of dollars to charities and community organisations from money raised at their open days and the organisation also contributed annual surpluses in the form of community garden grants to approved publicly accessible projects and to bushfire recovery programs.

Thanks to the efforts of the original SA Open Garden program in 1986, Australia's Open Garden Scheme, Open Gardens Australia, and now Open Gardens SA, the South Australian public has had the opportunity and pleasure of visiting beautiful private gardens for over 30 years!

*Follow OGSA on Facebook and Instagram*



*The Garden at Wilpena Street, Eden Hills*



*The Olives, Yankalilla*



*Nantara, Verdun*



*Clear View, Aldgate*

## Plant Profile – The Magnificent Magnolia!

By Trevor Nottle (Photos Di Michalk)

*Magnolia x soulangiana*



Scattered through the eastern suburbs of Adelaide and more frequently in the Adelaide Hills this magnolia will soon be in flower. From bare branches fat and furry buds swell as the days warm after winter and ere long a glorious display of white flowers stained with pink will stand out to passers-by. Walkers will also be able to detect a delicious perfume wafting from the prodigious show of flowers. Then it's all over for another year. The flowers shatter and new leaves emerge. The floraison may be short but who would miss it?

Magnolias are named in honour of French botanist Jean Magnol who lived in Montpellier during the 16<sup>th</sup> C. He practised as a physician and lecturer in botany at the University of Montpellier where plants were an essential study for the role they played in the pharmacopia of the age. By this means he had contacts with many a prominent botanist and was highly esteemed by his contemporaries. He corresponded with John Ray, William Sherard and James Petiver (England), Paul Hermann and Petrus Houltuyn (Leiden), Jan Commelin (Amsterdam), J.H. Lavater (Zurich) and J.Salvador (Barcelona), among others.

In 1687 Magnol became 'Demonstrator of plants' at the botanic garden of Montpellier, in other words the chief lecturer. In 1693, he was nominated 'doctor to the kings court'. He was later appointed Professor of Medicine at the University of Montpellier and also appointed Director of the botanic garden in 1696. Finally he received the title 'Inspector of the garden' for the rest of his life.

Magnol was one of the founding members of the Société Royale des Sciences de Montpellier (1706) and held one of the three chairs in botany. In 1709 he was called to Paris to occupy the seat in the prestigious Académie Royale des Sciences de Paris.

Quite obviously he was a man of some importance, sufficiently so for a new genus of plants to be named in his honour.

Rather typical of the time when communication was difficult, even between learned men of science, there was confusion about what was what. The genus *Magnolia* was raised by another prominent French botanist a Mons. Plumier who was in fact referring to a tree from Madagascar. Over time other trees, not from Madagascar but China and America, were given the name *Magnolia*. To sort out the tangle the name was confirmed for the Chinese and American trees and a Mexican plant was blessed with the name *Plumeria* instead – the botanical name given to Frangipani. Even this arrangement was not without a whiff of scandal as Frangipani was already named after an Italian aristocrat who invented a synthetic smell said to resemble that of the Mexican plant. Such were the real-politics of the day, the Napoleonic era, that the French view of correct nomenclature was recognised.



*Soulangiana*, the second part of the name, recognises the breeder who was a French plantsman Étienne Soulangé-Bodin (1774–1846), a retired cavalry officer in Napoleon's

army. He hybridised two magnolias and raised the seeds, one of which he selected as being of special note and worthy of introduction to gardens. From the original hybrid many others have been raised, colours vary from creamy 'yellow' to pure white and all shades of pink to quite rich, dark tones. Flower shapes vary from slim lily-like forms to goblet shaped.

The parents of *Magnolia x soulangiana* were two Chinese species. *Magnolia denudata* (white) and *Magnolia liliflora* (wine red). In their natural habitat both species are found in mixed woodland on mildly acidic to neutral soil comprised largely of leaf mould and leaf litter, free-draining and moisture retentive. Given such conditions this magnolia will grow well and flower. On the Adelaide Plains, where such soil types are unknown *Magnolia x soulangiana* can be grown very satisfactorily with a few small adjustments; ensure good drainage by planting the bush on a slightly raised mound; use flowers of sulphur mixed in the soils to modify the alkalinity, and mulch thickly with fine pine bark, pine-needles and leaf mould.



Resist the urge to dig and plant in the mulched area around the bush. Magnolias resent root disturbance; their roots are brittle and break easily, so avoid the risk of damage. Once the new leaves have filled out and reached full size, usually just before Christmas, maintain soil moisture by judicious irrigation every 3 weeks or so. Lift the mulch to check. By Autumn the leaves will have a somewhat ratty, browned appearance but there is no need for concern, or feeding and watering; it is simply a natural result of our hot, dry Summers. The leaves will fall, the wood will be ripened and the flowers buds already formed for next Spring's flowering.

### Garden Owner Information Function

On Sunday the 16 July 2017 OGSA held the annual 'Garden Owner Information and Thank You' event. This is an opportunity for the Committee to thank our garden owners for their generosity and hard work in opening their gardens for the previous season, and provide information and the materials to the garden owners opening for the new season.

The event was held in the garden of Chris and Margaret Burrell in Leabrook. Their garden is stunning and demonstrates just how good a garden can be in mid-winter with careful plant selection and interesting features. The Committee greatly appreciates their generosity in again hosting this function.

Our garden owners enjoyed the company of members of our "gardening family" and had a lovely afternoon mingling with like-minded people and sharing experiences of opening their gardens. First time garden owners from the previous season were presented with a special plaque as a thank-you and a memento of joining the OGSA Family. As always, our talented Events Committee excelled in providing the delicious afternoon tea.



## Never Underestimate the Value of a Good Photograph!

It is really important for OGSA to have excellent photographs of each of our gardens which show them to their best advantage at the time of year the garden is opening (i.e. Spring photographs for a Spring opening). A good photograph will enhance the chances of the local print media promoting an open garden ahead of other potential events or activities. Never underestimate the value of a good photo – as the saying goes ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’!

Photographs need to be at least 1-2 megabyte (MB) in size to be suitable for many publications to print.

When taking photos try to include a point of focus – a bird bath, sculpture, seat etc. Consider taking both portrait and landscape orientations. Introduce depth of field and perspective. Photograph interesting garden features – possibly a large urn, water feature, rose covered arch, a special plant or tree in full bloom etc.

Avoid clutter and trying to show too much in one photo. It may be better to take a series of photos. Make sure your images are sharp and clear. Take lots of photos and select the best ones – with a digital camera, or even a smart phone, it’s easy to delete photos you don’t like, or consider unsuitable!

Open Gardens SA would love to see your photos to assist us in promoting our program of Open Gardens. If you have high quality suitable photographs we would be delighted to receive them and you might just see your photo in the print media, on the OGSA webpage, Facebook or on our Instagram page!

Please label your photos with your name as the photographer, the name of the garden and the date when the photo was taken. You can send suitable photos to our email address at:

[photos@opengardensa.org.au](mailto:photos@opengardensa.org.au)



*Avondale, Rhynie, near Riverton*



*Al-Ru Farm, One Tree Hill*



*Tickletank, Mount Barker*



*Brightview, Blackwood*



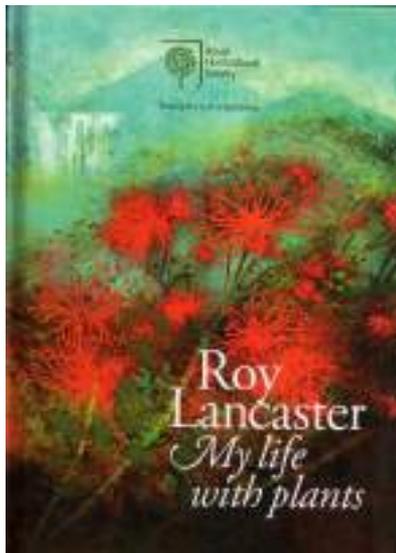
*Ashgrove Iris Garden, Gumeracha*



*Highcroft, Harrogate*

## Book Review

By Trevor Nottle



### MY LIFE WITH PLANTS

by Roy Lancaster

pub. Royal Horticultural Society/  
Filbert Press, London, 2017

ISBN 978—0-9938892-5-2 pp 312,  
full colour throughout, HB (hard  
back)

Roy Lancaster was born in 1937 and has spent his whole life as a horticulturalist beginning as an apprentice in a Parks and Gardens Dept., in Bolton (UK) and finishing up as a world renowned plantsman,

author, media presenter and international plant hunter. Even before this career his interest was sparked in childhood by bird-watching, the study of natural history and hiking. In many ways this life story could be seen as a dream run, a run of life-long pleasure and excitement in the world of plants and gardening. And so it has been, though not without its ups and downs, disappointments, misadventures and scrapes along the way.

*MY LIFE WITH PLANTS* takes a very broad look at Lancaster's life and as such could be found to be a little unbalanced in that there is considerable space given over to his early formative experiences and influences. When read in conjunction with his two books *PLANT HUNTING IN NEPAL* (Croom Helm, London, 1981) and *A PLANTSMAN'S PARADISE: TRAVELS IN CHINA* (Antique Collector's, Woodbridge [UK], 1989) Lancaster's life story is restored to greater balance – at least as far as garden minded readers are concerned.

For those readers with little or no knowledge of how the apprenticeship system for gardeners worked *MY LIFE WITH PLANTS* will be something of a revelation: very early morning starts, long hours, menial tasks, low wages, a rigid structure, substantial exams and slow progress through the ranks. Fortunately for Lancaster the system was beginning to crumble after WW2 when he began his training. While he received a very sound basic training as an apprentice, opportunities began to open and he took advantage of this to move in previously impossible directions and to steer a new course for himself. Following him is a very enjoyable experience for his readers; he can write well, has travelled widely

and he has been a keen and interested observer. His memory seems prodigious; from his recollections of the detail of plant hunting expeditions and visiting gardens around the world to the numerous personalities he has known.

I was privileged to work with him as a judge at the Courson flower show outside Paris several times and found him friendly, thoughtful and happy to share his knowledge and time, characteristics which are demonstrated in his writing.

Gardeners everywhere, not just in the UK, will find as they read his biography that they grow plants Roy Lancaster has introduced to gardens as a result of his botanical expeditions.

Recommended reading.



Aberfoyle, Kongorong



Taronga, Stirling

## Spring 2017 Program of OGSA

The first garden open for our new program is *Etre* at Willunga, opening on Sunday 27 August. This Spring OGSA is opening approximately 30 gardens – with more than half being new gardens not previously opened to the public by OGSA. Garden visitors will be delighted to know a number of our regular gardens continue to open – including the ever popular *Al-Ru Farm* at One Tree Hill, *Tickletank* at Mt Barker and *Ashgrove Iris Garden* at Gumeracha.

The full listing of open gardens with all the details, Garden Notes and beautiful photographs is available on our new web page:

<http://opengardensa.org.au/current-season>



*Riverline, Loxton*



*Taringa Park, Middleton*



*Estella, Myrtle Bank*



*Crabapple Cottage, Leabrook*



*The Bonney Garden, Golden Grove*

### OGSA Recommends...

We recommend you always check our web page for garden opening details. The web page 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 web page will always list any late additions or cancellations to our garden opening program.

### Open Gardens SA 2017 Spring Calendar

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

#### August

**27 Sunday ONLY**

*Etre*, Winter opening, 10 Delaney Avenue, Willunga

#### September

**2 - 3**

*Avondale*, 146 Avondale Road, Rhynie, near Riverton

**9 - 10**

*Brightview*, 10 Brightview Ave, Blackwood (NEW)

**16 - 17**

*Riverline*, 141 Karoonda Highway, Loxton (NEW)

**30 September - 1 - 2 October, Saturday, Sunday & Monday**

*Avondale*, 146 Avondale Road, Rhynie, near Riverton

*Estella*, 38 Cross Road, Myrtle Bank (NEW)

(Continued next page)

**October**

**1 - 2, Sunday & Monday**

*Al-Ru Farm*, 1016 One Tree Hill Road, One Tree Hill

**7 - 8**

*Crabapple Cottage*, 1 Jean Street, Leabrook (NEW)

**14 - 15**

*Tickletank*, 24 Hill Street, Mount Barker

**15 Sunday ONLY**

*Marybank*, 404 Montacute Road, Rostrevor

*Taringa Park*, 671 Airport Road, Middleton

**21 - 22**

*The Bonney Garden*, 48 Martindale Ave, Golden Grove

*The Garden at Wilpena Street*, 41 Wilpena Street, Eden Hills

*Orrapoorra*, 8 Gerald Roberts Road, Seppeltsfield (NEW)

*Noelaini*, 31 Easton Road, North Shields (NEW)

**27 October - 1 November, Friday to Wednesday Inclusive**

*Aberfoyle*, 213 School Road, Kongorong, South East

**28 - 29**

*Ashgrove Iris Garden*, 53-55 Albert Street, Gumeracha

**November**

**4 - 5**

*Anna's Garden*, 46 Gladys Street, Clarence Gardens

*Wairoa*, 142 Mount Barker Road, Aldgate

**11 - 12**

*Clear View*, 102 Strathalbyn Road, Aldgate (NEW)

*Highcroft*, 231 Mail Road, Harrogate

*Wahroonga*, 31 William Road, Worrolong, South East (NEW)

**12 Sunday ONLY**

*Bain House*, 22 Agnes Street, Clare (NEW)

**18 Saturday ONLY**

*Arana*, 353 Playford Highway, Kingscote, Kangaroo Island (NEW)

*Cockatoo Cottage*, 166 Brownlow Road, Kingscote, KI (NEW)

**18 - 19**

*Etre*, Spring opening, 10 Delaney Ave, Willunga

*The Olives*, 227 Salt Creek Road, Yankalilla (NEW)

**25 - 26**

*Nantara*, 32 Heyson Road, Verdun (NEW)

*Semmens Interesting Garden*, 33 Torrens St., Torrensville (NEW)

*Taronga*, 2 Waverley Ridge Road, Stirling (NEW)

**December**

**2 - 3**

*Ising Cottage*, 12 Ising Road, Crafers West (NEW)



**Meet your OGSA  
Committee Members  
– David Hancock.**

After a career in the business services sector as a market research consultant I embraced a 'leaf change' and studied Garden Design and Horticulture. I now work part time as 'gardener to the rich and famous!'

I have been involved with Open Gardens in South Australia since 2009 and was chair of the Regional Committee when the national Open Gardens Australia ceased operations in June 2015.

At that time we received great support and encouragement from the wider South Australian gardening community to have a go at establishing a local scheme. People were not ready to give up the opportunity to visit the best private gardens in the state.

I was pleased to be a Foundation Member of OGSA. I seem to be getting a reputation as the resident 'stats' man. I also have a keen interest in getting hold of the best photographs to showcase our wonderful gardens.

## Special Event – Theatre in the Garden

12 January – 3 February 2018

### No – one escapes the gossips!

Following the sell-out success of *Sense and Sensibility*, Blue Sky Theatre will be back in the garden this summer with *The School for Scandal*.

Sheridan's classic, fast-paced comedy will be given a new twist at four gardens including Carrick Hill and Stangate House from 12 January to 3 February 2018.

It's Summer 1955 and in a society awash with gossip Lady Sneerwell, and every other tittle-tattle in London, ruin the reputations of their rich friends purely for the fun of it. Among them are two brothers: one, a loveable rogue, the other a two-faced MP, who are tested by their wealthy uncle to determine who deserves his inheritance. Who will get the cash and win the heart of young Maria?

The School for Scandal will be a feast for the eyes with a bold palette of 1950s fashions plus some fun at the races. In a society awash with gossip, rumours and backbiting, who'll be carrying her heels at the end of the day?

Join us for Pimms, picnics and plenty of intrigue in four glorious garden settings this Summer.

Show details and tickets on sale (\$35 per person) on our website: <http://opengardensa.org.au/events>



### More Good News...

Open Gardens SA has enjoyed enormous support since its inception in 2015 following the closing of Open Gardens Australia.

The organisation has helped open in excess of 100 gardens across the state, attracting approximately 50,000 visitors. Proceeds from gate fees, morning teas and plant stalls has seen more than \$300,000 donated to a huge variety of charities.

And we are delighted to announce we have launched the new Open Gardens SA Webpage – which went 'live' on the 1 August 2017. Importantly, our web address hasn't changed – and the new web page is essential reading!

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



Arana, Kingscote, Kangaroo Island



Ising Cottage, Crafers West



*The beautiful garden shared by Margaret and Chris Burrell for our Garden Owners Information and Thankyou Function on Sunday 16 July 2017. A delightful event in a lovely setting despite a rather damp afternoon!*



*Anna's Garden, Clarence Gardens*

### The Sad Passing of a Gardening Friend

It is with sadness that we share the news that Jane Fergusson, a dear friend and colleague known to many in the South Australian gardening community, died when she was hit by a train on the Stirling line on Friday morning, 28 July 2017. Jane will be fondly remembered by a great many of our gardening community as the first SA Co-Ordinator of Australia's Open Garden Scheme.

As a journalist she worked on many projects including her regular contributions to *Country Style*, *Australian House and Garden*, *Better Homes and Gardens* and other media publications. Jane was well loved and will be fondly remembered by many keen gardeners.



*Cockatoo Cottage, Kingscote, KI*

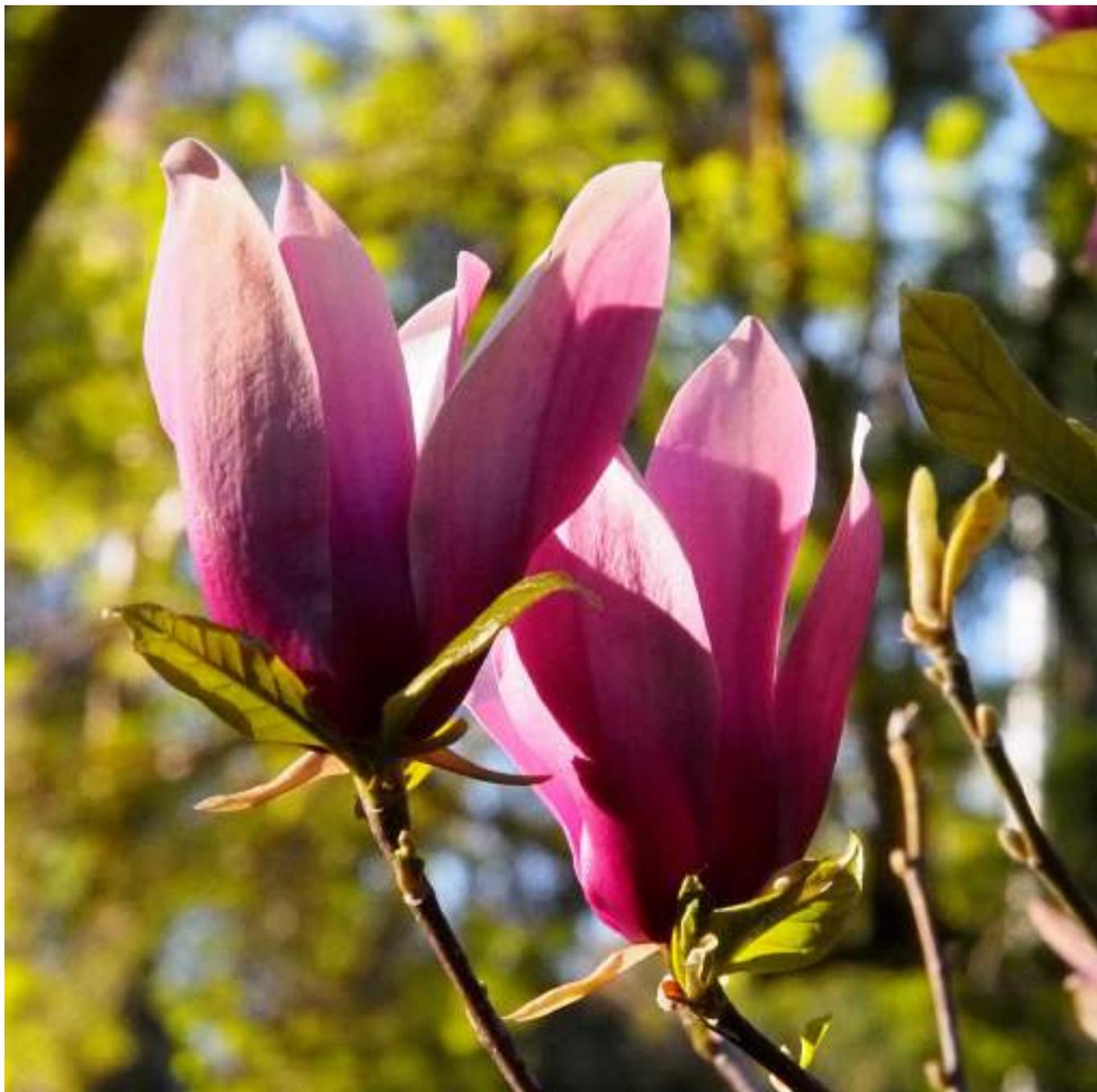


*Etre, Spring opening, Willunga*

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.**



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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/opengardensa/>

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

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*Editors: Trevor Nottle and Di Michalk.*

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