



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

Open Gardens South Australia

Welcomes you to Brian's Garden

Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd March, 2026

After years of living and working overseas, Margaret and Brian returned to a property that had been in their family for decades. They designed a new house and garden to reflect the places they had lived, while creating a welcoming space for friends and family. Completed in 2017, the garden draws on influences from the United States, Japan, and the United Kingdom, blended with their own personal style. Brian had a particular interest in foliage colour rather than floral display and having previously lived in Queensland, they loved colourful tropical plants. The species selected are better suited to Adelaide's climate and focus mostly on plants that provide structure and interest throughout the year.

The verge garden features a central lawn bordered by miniature roses that flower from spring to autumn. Along the driveway, a traditional rose garden supplies blooms for a small street stall run by the family's grandchildren. A timber arbour covered with *Pierre de Ronsard* roses leads to a unique commissioned brass sculpture. Beyond this area, conifers are planted beneath emerging crepe myrtles bordered with a hedge of buxus. Ornamental pear trees guide the approach from the street, while additional crepe myrtles define the front garden boundary, and a Canadian maple is set within the lawn as a feature tree.

An avenue of birches leads to a pond and an expansive outdoor room fitted with adjustable louvres making it suitable for use in all weather conditions. From here, the main lawn opens to the tennis court, outdoor kitchen/entertaining area, and a wisteria arbour to the right, screened by columnar *Cupressus sempervirens* 'Glaucua'. A meandering gravel path winds through the main garden, showcasing deciduous trees including pears, crab-apples, ornamental plums, and others, complemented by traditional perennials and other plants such as leucodendrons. Numerous sculptures are dotted throughout the garden each with significant meaning and history.

At the lowest level of the garden, an understated lawn with birches was transformed into a Japanese-themed garden inspired by the years Margaret and Brian lived and worked in Japan. Brian and Margaret constructed the teahouse and bridge, while Hills Classic Gardens was engaged to create a climate-compatible design. This garden was completed shortly before Brian's passing in August 2019. The Japanese garden is at its best in spring, when the standard *Malus floribunda* are in blossom and it has received multiple Master Landscapers of South Australia Awards of Excellence. A resident mob of kangaroos also frequents this part of the garden and Margaret welcomes them and enjoys watching them come and go. They browse selectively on plants such as *Raphiolepis*, *Casuarina* 'Cousin It', and *Prunus*, while leaving many others untouched.

Heading back up the hill over the bridge, a putting green has been constructed with ginkgo trees planted at one end. Ornamental pear trees that once flanked the steps have been removed after significant structural failing and will be replaced with more reliable species such as *Parrotia persica* or *Pistacia chinensis*. From the rear of the house, the garden is seen as a continuous canopy of trees and foliage, effectively screening neighbouring dwellings. Seasonal changes bring distinct variation in colour, texture, and form, reinforcing the garden's park-like character.

Four large tanks collect rainwater from the entire roof space and this is used in combination with a 'top up' supply from a bore, allowing the garden to be watered during the hotter months.

In 2017 the Housing Industry judged the house the Best Custom-Built House of the year.

The garden brings Margaret joy, happy memories and comfort and no doubt Brian would be pleased with what his garden has become since its inception 10 years ago.

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.

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