



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

# Open Gardens South Australia Welcomes you to **Christine's Cottage Garden**

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2026

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Welcome to Christine's Cottage Garden, I hope you enjoy and are inspired during your visit today. We purchased the property at 17 St Peters Tce in Willunga in November 2012. I have always been a passionate gardener, so my wish list included a garden with potential while Larry wanted room for a workshop. Initially described as a 'botanical' setting, the basic potential of the garden was evident. The block is triangular in shape and divided into three sections, a front, side and rear garden. There was an established maple in the front garden and a few fruit trees in the side and back garden, along with a newly planted plumbago hedge around the perimeter. The stone wall that curves through the front of the property defining the driveway was also already here.

I began working on the front and rear gardens first as we planned to extend the house into a section of the side garden in due course. Unfortunately, most of the existing fruit trees were damaged due to sun exposure and disease, so most of these had to be removed. The apple tree in the side garden was healthy, so that remains. There were also three Jacaranda trees on the property.

My vision for the garden was to create a peaceful, colourful and organic garden which would be a haven for myself, local bird life, animals and beneficial insects. The priority initially was to improve the soil which lacked organic matter. I am a firm believer in not using chemicals in my garden and that feeding the soil is a crucial aspect to achieving success. Choosing suitable plants for the appropriate positions is also very important.

Having repaired rotting fence rails in the rear perimeter fence with Larry's help, I began preparing the garden beds. Initially they were straight, running parallel to the fence. To soften and add visual interest, I set about introducing curved garden beds. This created the illusion that the garden space was larger than it actually is. This, combined with layered planting techniques and the park directly across the road, provided a perfect back drop as a borrowed landscape.

Plants in the rear section of the garden include climbing roses along the boundary fences. Directly in front of these, I have planted a number of standard roses. The garden areas in front of the standards include hybrid tea and David Austin roses with smaller cottage garden perennials, bulbs and annuals for additional visual interest.

Many of the roses in my garden and other shrubs have been salvaged and saved from going to the green waste. I like to recycle what I can and give plants a second chance. Most have rewarded me with outstanding results.

Here in Willunga, we often have very strong gully winds, particularly in the spring. It became evident that the plants in the front garden were suffering from exposure to these winds, so I decided to erect a picket fence behind the plumbago hedge to help protect the plants. The fence also effectively unifies the house and garden into the surrounding landscape as well as providing some privacy. After much hard work digging all the post holes and painting all the pickets, the main front fence was completed. We added another picket fence to the northern side of the front garden, side garden and matching gates.

Another feature of the front garden with special significance are the metal arbours. The one that is incorporated into the front picket fence was erected as a memorial for a dear friend who passed

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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.

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away. The structure is decorative with metal leaves and roses included in the design. The gate matches well although they were not made at the same time. The second arbour is located near the carport where steps provide access to the upper section of the front garden. They are the work of local blacksmith Peter Stentiford. Another decorative metal gate he made provides easy access to enter the property by the driveway. All of these features add interest and character to the garden.

The side garden was the last area to receive some work, as part of it was a building site while extensions were completed. This section has shady and sunny aspects to it, so the plantings reflect this. Clivias and camellias enjoy the cool areas under the neighbouring trees while the climbing David Austin, heliotrope and cannas enjoy the sunnier locations. Wildlife enjoy the hedge in the side garden and blue tongue lizards do a wonderful job controlling snails for me.

As you walk through the property, you will probably notice that we have numerous rainwater tanks. We also have solar panels and battery storage. Our house runs on rainwater all year. We have made a conscious decision to be as environmentally friendly as possible. This aligns strongly with our belief that we can all do practical things to look after our environment and reduce our impact.

People often ask whether I have finished the garden. The answer is definitely no. A garden is never finished. It is always changing and evolving. It is my happy place, my living canvas of colour and scent that brings me much peace and joy. My favourite place in the garden is sitting on the back veranda with a cup of tea early in the morning listening to the kookaburras and other birds singing to me while bees and dragon flies begin investigating the flowers.

Since we last opened the garden, it has been recognised by the City of Onkaparinga in the Mayors Garden Competition winning the Best Urban Residential Garden category in 2023 and 2024. In 2025, the garden was entered into the Garden Hall of Fame. In early November 2025, the garden played a significant role in our lives as we got married in our back garden after 37 years together. A very joyful and happy event shared with family and friends.

I must take this opportunity to thank my partner Larry who has tirelessly assisted me with creating these garden spaces. I couldn't have done it without his skills and support. Larry's mother was a fabulous gardener and had that special gift and ability to share and impart her knowledge. She was a great inspiration to me, and we spent many happy hours together in her magnificent garden.

It gives me great pleasure to share this garden with family and friends and I hope you have enjoyed viewing it today and that it has been an inspiration to you. Always remember, gardening is good for your soul, so enjoy the simple pleasures of life and keep gardening.

Thank you for visiting Christine's Cottage Garden.

Christine Pearson

**Charities:** The charities benefitting from your visit today are the Volunteers of the Willunga Farmers Market and the Willunga Recreation Park.

**Stalls:** We have morning & afternoon tea available, pre-loved garden and hand tools for sale as well as the gift card, seed pack and plant stalls. Visitors can use **cash** or eftpos for purchasing from the stalls.