



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

Open Gardens South Australia

Welcomes you to

Churston

Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th October, 2023

Welcome to *Churston*, built by Captain Henry Martin and his wife Sarah in 1905. We moved to this property in 2002. The garden had been neglected for years - there were a few mature trees, some ratty lawn, lots of concrete, asphalt and a small chain link fence on the boundary. The side near the pear tree was a parking area for trucks, with reinforced concrete 20cm thick. We removed this by hand over many, many weekends by jackhammer and crowbar. New topsoil, compost and mulch were added to bring life back to the soil. Plants have been sourced from gardener's markets, cuttings, nurseries and friend's gardens. We use an automated watering system and we mulch heavily with pea straw from the local Kilkenny fodder store.

Cheryl loves wild cottage colour while Daniel likes formal plantings. We work the two styles together, fairly successfully we think. Plant choice is Cheryl's domain while Daniel has planned the garden structure - the garden beds and paths. Cheryl is an animal lover (its rubbed off on Daniel) The Silkie and Pekin bantams free range, with our 13 year old Silkie leaving the mortal coil last year.

Front garden: We like to use recycled/re-purposed items where possible, so some of the broken-up concrete has been used on several paths to make imitation slate crazy-paving. Daniel created the central front path using red bricks that had been dumped behind the shed. Crisscross patterned edging was created with an angle grinder and black paint to match the verandah patterning. Garden edging also consists of reclaimed red bricks in many areas.

The Photinia, original to the garden, has grown a lot since we arrived and now offers a fair amount of shade to the lawn and garden beds. A side effect is that the David Austin standard Alnwyck Roses, that we planted along the verandah, were 'reaching' due to the shade, and sadly had to go!

A variety of heritage roses, Salvias, Agastache, Nepeta and other hardy Mediterranean type plants add colour to the garden beds.

Over the years we've experimented with various hedging plants and Euonymus Tom Thumb is what you see now. We also like to use Liriope and Society Garlic for edging plants as they add a loose yet formal effect.

We have a love/hate relationship with the New Zealand Christmas bush on the eastern side of the front garden. We trim it to a tree shape and regularly remove suckers and extra growth to keep it contained. It offers shade to this section, but its roots are fibrous and make under-planting difficult. We find Liriope, seaside daisy, Acanthus, Gaura and Plectranthus are able to survive.

Gravel garden: The two Manchurian pears, which have grown larger than anticipated, were planted to shade the house about 15 years ago. This semi-formal area initially had Winchester Cathedral white roses, but as the trees grew and this area became shadier, the roses were removed. Now we use cane begonias, liriope and pots to give structure to the area. The wonderful Star Jasmine was chosen to cover the fence as the foliage is dense and without the bare legs of other similar creepers. It also flowers in the shade.

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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At the end of this garden is a 'dry shade walk', with Tree Begonias, Irisene, Colless and Windflowers. Plantings are designed to naturalise around paths for that 'woodland feel'. Pots are used to provide height and to display specimen plants such as the Tree Fuschia. We've utilised vertical space with hanging baskets and included a colourful mosaic water feature to enhance the 'chi' of this part of the garden.

Pear tree side garden: The pear tree is decades old and we love the Spring blossom. In Summer the parrots love the pears, demolishing them with squawking, cheerful chatter. We actually had a large pond here for many years with hundreds of fish, but as the tree grew the parrots spat chewed pear into the pond below. Eventually we replaced it with a much smaller water feature, which provides native bees (blue banded, false wasp and leaf-cutters) and honey bees with a drink.

This area features many Princess Lilies, salvias and more heritage roses. Cheryl's mosaic balls and path steppers provide garden 'jewels'.

The potting shed is a re-purposed bird aviary. You'll see other re-purposed bits around the garden, which add a bit of character. Items such as the old Metter's stove and the copper, were original to the house.

As there is no irrigation along the house foundations, we plant low water use Cotyledon, Echeveria, Sedum, Evening Primrose and Veldt daisies to add color to this hot dry area. This area is loved by grasshoppers, which results in the 'machine gunning' of leaves.

Chicken's side garden: We have five bantams that forage around the garden. We chose small Pekin and Silkie bantams as they were less likely to destroy the garden. The only plants they savour are daisies – hence only a few daisies at Churston. Their 'egloo' is in this garden. Occasionally we find a clutch of eggs amongst the plants.

A mural by Cheryl on the fence adds interest and a bit of colour to this part of the garden. As the climbing rose on the shed only flowers once a year, Cheryl's painted a few 'additional flowers' to extend its flowering season!

Kitchen rear garden: Out the back we grow vegies and have espaliered some apples along the fence. The veg beds are raised to make them easier to care for, and more accessible.

West Croydon Bee & Butterfly Garden: Across the road from our place, this was planted in May 2019. It was developed by a local gardening group we're involved with, Rosetta Street Greening. Many of the plants were cuttings from the gardens of our volunteers. We received a grant from SA Water to provide taps (their most unusual and smallest grant!), and from Charles Sturt Council for irrigation. To support the project, Jeffries provided the mulch. This garden featured on ABC-TV's Gardening Australia in 2020.

We hope you've enjoyed your visit to Churston, where part of the entry fee will go to Safe Pets Safe Families, a charity which provides funding and support to help domestic violence victims to retain their pets, rather than having to surrender/euthanase them when they flee to safety. Morning/afternoon tea sales will help support projects by Rosetta Street Greening volunteers. Information on both groups is available at the entry to the garden.

Daniel Cooper and Cheryl Andrews-Cooper

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.