



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

Open Gardens South Australia Welcomes you to **Drouin**

Saturday 7th & Sunday 8th November, 2026

We purchased our 5 acre property in late 2013. I was looking for something to keep my husband busy in his retirement and knew I had found a 'project' when we saw this place as it ticked all the boxes. We moved in just before Christmas and waited about 6 months before we got started on the garden. So essentially this IS A NEW GARDEN. We are also new to gardening and learning as we go.

In the front garden there were some 20 year old trees, agapanthus, ring of roses and one small bed and the back garden was a 'cow paddock' with 5 golden elms; the perfect blank canvas. We have no plan on paper but just enjoy what is evolving around us and have already moved plants that were in the 'wrong spot'. Criteria that must be met includes continuous colour in the form of camellias, roses, bulbs, irises, salvias and other perennials, using the borrowed landscape and making the garden an exciting space for our grandchildren to enjoy with curving pathways and hiding places. Water features are an important inclusion with the rill being something a bit different.

The front garden has a park-like feel with the addition of a woodland garden that has just been planted with daffodils along with hydrangeas, camellias and perennials. The back is a rambling country style garden with some formal areas for added interest. It is important that the garden has a natural feel. Our inspiration comes from gardens we have visited both here and overseas – favourites include Sissinghurst and Beth Chattos in UK, Red Cow Farm in NSW and local gardens Al Ru Farm and Mandalay.

My favourite plant is the rose and we now have over 1000, Jim loves irises and we are gradually increasing their numbers. I love to let things self seed and move the plants if needed. We use a chipper and recycle almost 99.5% of garden waste into 10 bins – there is never enough compost! The soil is neutral to pH 6 and we have mains water as well as a bore and rainwater storage. The soil varies across the property and is mostly clay loam but part of the back of the property is very hydrophobic and has been a challenge for the trees we have planted. Fortunately there is no rock.

The garden is very much a work in progress. The thing I love most about our garden is that it is a living artwork and the plants are my paints. I am not in the least bit artistic, but I can use my creative urge to build a living picture that is forever changing. At present we are developing a bush garden, a Piet Ouldof style gravel garden and rejuvenating some existing beds close to the house. It has not been without a few issues! A battle with the dreaded rabbits has finally been won with a rabbit proof fence. We have had the usual issues to contend with, windy site and problems with drainage which we are resolving. Also the parrots especially the rosellas that attack the roses, some roses hardly have any flowers on them because of their continuous chewing. We have no shortage of birdlife and bees in our garden, from beautiful blue wrens and honey eaters to corellas, white cockatoos, galahs, magpies, ducks and many more.

Ours is a garden of contrasts, one minute you are in a small 'room' with hedges preventing you from viewing the other sections of the garden and the next minute you are out on a huge area of lawn with 5 magnificent River Red Gums. Mostly I want people to be able to take away design ideas that can be modified to suit their own space. We certainly have a large range of water features including a rill which is very special and an idea put forward by a dear friend who has since died – she was my mentor.

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://opengardenssa.org.au/>

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

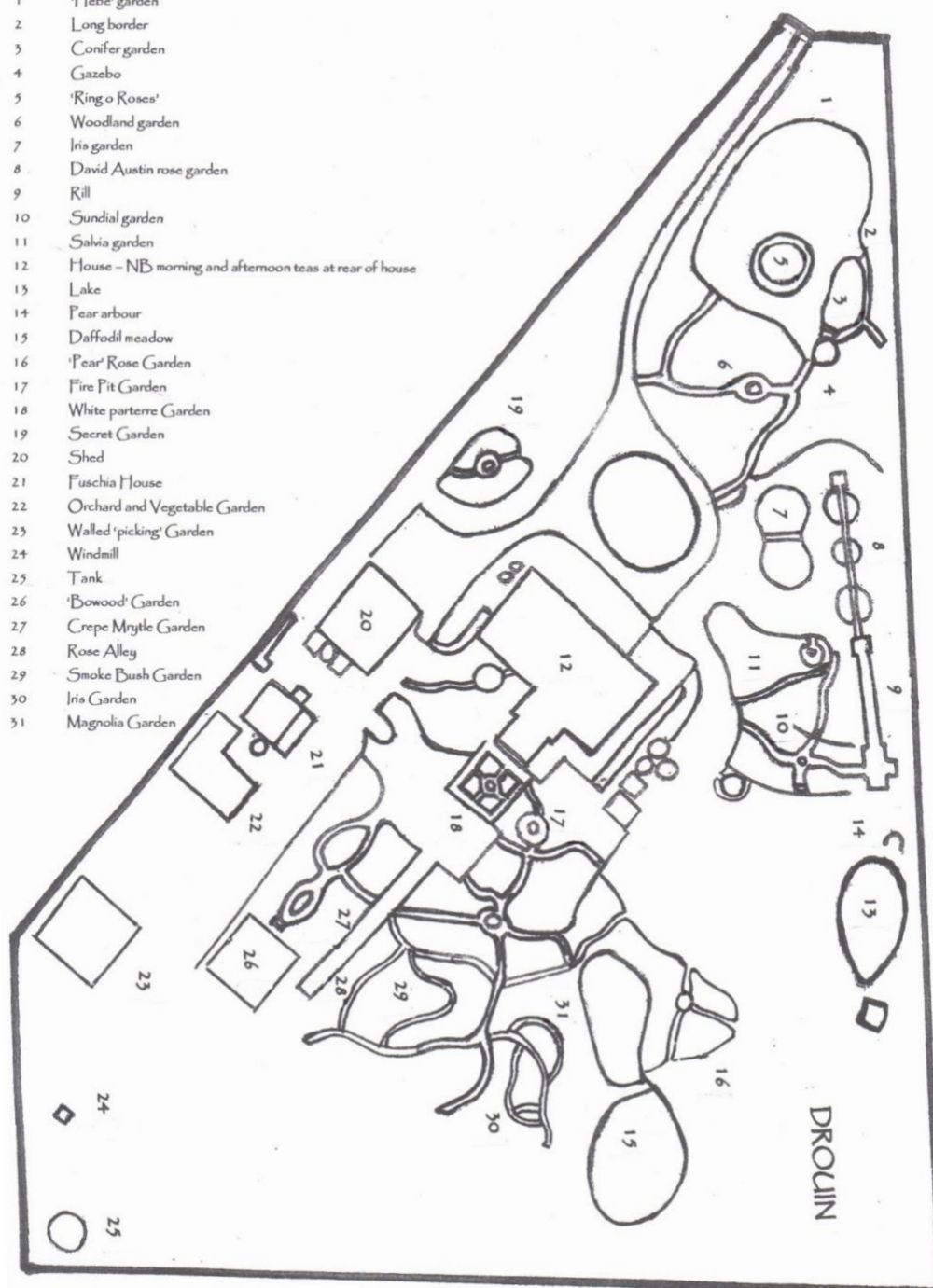
It is very much a team effort with no outside help, Jim is the consummate handyman and loves the garden as much as I do. The garden is our passion and totally consumes our days. We plan to be here for a long time and are loving our active retirement. It has been a dream of mine to share the garden, and we have many groups through our garden in springtime.

Thank you for visiting Drouin.

Sue and Jim Smith.

DROUIN - KEY TO GARDEN

- 1 'Hebe' garden
- 2 Long border
- 3 Conifer garden
- 4 Gazebo
- 5 'Ring o Roses'
- 6 Woodland garden
- 7 Iris garden
- 8 David Austin rose garden
- 9 Rill
- 10 Sundial garden
- 11 Salvia garden
- 12 House - NB morning and afternoon teas at rear of house
- 13 Lake
- 14 Pear arbour
- 15 Daffodil meadow
- 16 'Pear' Rose Garden
- 17 Fire Pit Garden
- 18 White parterre Garden
- 19 Secret Garden
- 20 Shed
- 21 Fuschia House
- 22 Orchard and Vegetable Garden
- 23 Walled 'picking' Garden
- 24 Windmill
- 25 Tank
- 26 'Bowood' Garden
- 27 Crepe Myrtle Garden
- 28 Rose Alley
- 29 Smoke Bush Garden
- 30 Iris Garden
- 31 Magnolia Garden



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.