



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

Open Gardens South Australia Welcomes you to **Indigo Blue**

Sunday 6th & Monday 7th October, 2024

First Nation land of the Ngarrindjeri; Basham family dairy farm; vacant block; holiday home/garden & since 2016 permanent home/garden.

Location, location, location but a tough ask for a gardener!

After building the house, 1.2 acres of pasture grass adjacent to the Steam Ranger – Cockle Train railway line became the blank canvas for a new coastal garden. Located 400m from the beach the flat site presented many challenges – strong salt laden winds, poorly drained alkaline clay soil and rabbits in plague proportions. The annual rainfall for Port Elliot is 502mm, with a typical Mediterranean pattern of the highest falls during the winter months (May to September). The winters are mild with only an odd light frost, but in summer even though the temperature is often degrees cooler than Adelaide, we do experience runs of very hot weather and strong drying north/north westerly winds.

In 2009 we finished building the house, located to take advantage of the 180° view of the coast and adjacent farmland. The house was full of light, and we were able to watch the daily weather show – regularly seeing intensely coloured double full arc rainbows and the myriads of colour changes and moods of the Southern Ocean. Hence the property name – ‘Indigo Blue’.

The garden was commenced in 2010 with contours being added using soil from the house excavations, the site was fenced (rabbit proofed in 2016), pathways and the driveway laid out. The initial planting was 4m wide windbreaks of mixed native & exotic species on the S & W boundaries.

Resilient Australian native and Mediterranean species including succulents with interesting foliage, contrasting textures and bold architectural form were planted in generous groups to create striking combinations of foliage shapes and colours. Many plants have been clipped into spheres or flowing organic shapes typical of vegetation in coastal areas, resulting in a spectacular and water efficient garden that fits beautifully into its surrounding landscape. Dotted throughout are pieces of sculpture relating to the coastal site and there are several features constructed from limestone rock by local stonemasons. Norfolk Island pines have been planted to add height in the long term. These were planted as tube stock and now measure about 4m in height.

The Steam Ranger Cockle Train which passes the property was the inspiration for the railway theme that makes the garden unique and adds a touch of fun! The main path to the house is bordered with sections of railway line, the garden shed is a re-purposed SA Rail goods’ van, and the adjacent chook house mimics its shape. Continuing the theme, there is a cute little round pillbox-like structure that was once a rail-line phone box, old sleepers have been used to construct retaining walls and the mock railway siding, which includes the ‘Indigo Blue’ replica railway station sign.

A ‘Gin Walk’ with juniper, citrus, cucumber and other botanicals used in making the classic G & T is another quirky feature, as is the beautiful bright blue mosaicked ‘sofa’. Vegetables and herbs are grown in raised garden beds, including wicking beds, and olive trees border the paths leading to the Kythera stone circle – inspired by the ancient stone walls on the Greek island of Kythera. The fire pit area and the sheltered courtyard provide great outdoor spaces for entertaining family and friends.

I would like to acknowledge Mark Barnett and his landscaping team; Johnny, Pete & Mike – local stone masons for the stone walls & features; Mike – mosaic artist; Cliff, Vito & Phil for on going maintenance/mowing and David for the chook palace & rabbit proof fence. Great work team!

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://opengardensa.org.au/>

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Printed sources of information used when planning the garden included the MGS Gardening in SA – A Resource Book for Climate Compatible Gardens, It's Blue with Five Petals by Ann Prescott, Alexandrina Plains Zone – Trees for Life order booklet and Coastal Gardens – a planting guide, SA Government NRM booklet.

Plants to be seen in the garden include:

Acacia baileyana (Cootamundra Wattle), *Acacia sophorae* (Coastal Golden Wattle)
Adenanathos sericeus (Woolly bush), *Agapanthus africanus* (Agapanthus),
Allocasuarina verticillate (Drooping Sheoak), *Alyogyne huegelii* (Native lilac hibiscus)
Aracaria heterophylla (Norfolk Island Pine), *Artemisia 'Powis Castle'* (Wormwood)
Atriplex nummularia (Saltbush), *Eremophila ssp* (Emu bushes)
Ballota pseudodictamnus (Ballota), *Banksia integrifolia* (Coastal Banksia)
Banksia marginata (Silver Banksia), *Callitris glaucophylla* (Coastal Cypress Pine)
Ceratonia siliqua (Carob), *Cordyline australis* (NZ Cabbage Tree), *Correa spp*
Coprosma repens (Mirror Bush), *Dianella ssp* (Flax Lily), *Dietes iridoides* (Wild Iris)
Dymondia margaretae (Silver Carpet), *Eucalyptus porosa* (Mallee box), *Euphorbia ssp*
Echium candicans (Pride of Maderia), *Ficinia nodosa* (Knobby Club Rush),
Ficus carica (Common Fig), *Grevillea lavandulacea* (Lavender Grevillea)
Lavandula angustifolia (English lavender), *Leucadendron ssp*, *Limonium perezii* (Sea Lavender)
Melaleuca nesophila (Showy Honey Myrtle), *Meterosideros excelsa* (NZ Christmas Tree)
Myoporum insulare (Common Boobialla), *Myoporum parvifolium* (Creeping boobialla)
Nerium oleander (Oleander), *Olea europaea* (Olive), *Phormium tenax* (NZ flax)
Rosa ssp (various), *Rosmarinus officinalis* (Rosemary), *Teucrium ssp* (Germander)
Westringia fruticosa (Coastal Rosemary), *Xanthorrhoea quadrangulate* (Grass tree)
Yucca elephantipes (Yucca)

Succulents include varieties of Aeonium, Agave, Aloe, Cotyledon and Senecio

Bulbs & Corms – Nerines, Daffodils, Bearded Irises, Dutch Irises, Haemanthus Coccineus (Ox tongue Lily) and white Belladonna Lilies

Fruit trees include – apples, figs and citrus varieties

Thank you for visiting my garden – proceeds from the opening go to the Port Elliot Community 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.