



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

# Open Gardens South Australia Welcomes you to **Joe's Connected Garden**

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2024

## **This is our twelfth opening!**

Backyards connected to the neighbours – for many, a beautiful image of our childhood, recreated here today. Our vision of simple respectful community. What we have to offer each other here is a place to grow things and a sense of neighbourliness and trust that has transcended the suburban fences which normally divide us. For all of us, it means something nice is fruiting throughout the year.

What has changed this year? Last year it was herbs and chillies, exotic tropical fruit trees, a veggie plant sale, a beehive, shared fertiliser racks, more bench seating in lovely spots... and this year we now have quails (and yummy quail eggs), a new shared preserving shed, a new veranda, little ducklings, separate nets over strawberry beds, a new dragonfruit bed, new raised beds with air barriers to tree roots and lots more herbs.

There are five connected gardens open this year although there are now around 20 local gardens and “satellite gardens” involved, with many connected together by gates. This year we are again opening the gardens of Seaton (Mary’s garden), Rosanne, Jess and Jesse, John, and Joe. Mary passed away last year and is greatly missed. Her garden (green) still has her mixed exotic fruit tree orchard at the back, planted 15 years ago and cared for by the neighbours.

Rosanne’s garden (red) was bare lawn when she moved in 19 years ago and she dug up the lawn, improved the soil and planted her orchard. Rosanne keeps two beautiful pheasants, a few ducks who do pest control, brambleberries in pots and grows her favourite fruits such as nectarines, blood orange, persimmon and strawberries, as well as an exotic ice-cream bean.

Joe’s garden (blue) is a manic array of plantings showing how to grow plants on concrete and in confined spaces. This garden experiments with various microclimates, ranging from tropical to arid to cool, from dryland to damp, from windy to protected, and from sunny to deep shade. The diverse plantings include rare tropical and subtropical fruits, various edible cacti, a range of citrus, grapes and many Mediterranean and temperate climate fruits, in the ground and in large wicking beds.

Jess and Jesse (purple garden) across the road was organically farmed by the original owner Irene for over 50 years. This garden contains many raised veggie beds, many types of herbs, trial ‘hugelkultur’ mounds growing berries, the community nursery and fig collection, a hedged fruit tree maze, a fig double circle, a patch of young mango trees and a flock of happy chickens and their chicks.

John’s garden (pink) is the newest, and was originally transformed by Jess and Jesse seven years ago from an overgrown jungle into herb and vegetable patches, which John has since extended and made into a place of abundance, including many chillies in containers. This garden contains many shared facilities (tools, irrigation, fertiliser racks etc). He has a cucumber tunnel and two rows of exotic fruit trees at the back, ready to be turned into a fruit tree tunnel. His latest adventure is a quail aviary and a shed for preserving produce. There is also an area reserved for future aquaponics. A native bush tucker garden is in progress in the front yard, recently extended by local indigenous students.

All the gardens are designed on permaculture principles and are managed using organic methods. The more recent plantings of trees and vegetables are placed in what we hope are optimum positions according to microclimate and competition, although we still make mistakes, and of course in our climate we still need to give supplementary watering.

---

**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/>

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

## Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening.

---

The nets are due for replacement next year, hopefully set higher up to prevent damage from branches and with improved mesh to allow easier access for pollinators. Within this protected oasis the connected neighbours hope to finally reap a bounty of their hundreds of varieties of fruit, herbs and vegetables.

Our gardens are not formally laid out and are a little crowded and untidy, but they are productive and easy to maintain. You, as visitors, can learn how to create a garden that will produce maximum return for minimum effort, and we give thanks to our many 'friends of the garden', including many visiting from overseas, who during the past year helped to maintain, expand and improve the gardens!

At this Open Garden, volunteers from the Rare Fruit Society will provide advice and accompanied tours of the gardens. Heavy clay which cracks in the summer has been easily turned into fertile and friable soil that supports the productive orchards. Most of the fruit trees are less than 14 years old, highly productive and provide welcome cool summer shade.

The main reason we open our gardens each year is to show people how easy it is to grow food and to provide information and educational support to the local area and beyond. In the last year we were able to expand our educational activities and workshops, after Covid-19 restrictions eased. We have been connected to the local schools for six years now and numerous groups of children from all years have had tours and learnt practical skills. Students from Playford International College came and helped in the gardens during most of last year. This year the students from Elizabeth Grove primary school have once again prepared a 'yellow brick road' activity for children and parents.

There are garden maps and self-guided tours with plant lists available on the day and many yellow signs that explain what we do. Please take time out to explore and look at highlights of the gardens, which include the converted swimming pool (with yabbies), 8-10 metre trees pollarded into a protective hedge, the 'Grow free' cart, lots of herb and vegetable patches, free-ranging chickens and ducks, the use of big pots and foam boxes, vertical gardening on trellises, espalier, pruning, hedging, multigrafting and close planting to grow fruit in small spaces, a fig circle, a fruit tree maze, 'hugelkultur' beds, wicking beds, worm farm in bathtub, bog gardens in bathtubs and IBCs, use of raised beds and much more, including rare and unusual fruit trees.

Further info at Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/JoeseConnectedGarden/> and

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/joesconnectedgarden/>

***This year, as always, our share of the gate takings will be donated to charity.***

We have an amazing line up of speakers again this year. There are also great stalls and static displays promoting edible gardening and sustainability, and a series of events such as making foam box wicking beds, soil moisture testing and irrigation installation. A variety of fruit trees and edible plants including many herbs and vegetables are available at the two plant sale locations. Refreshments and toilets are also available.

- **Follow the signs to the talks and workshops. For talks in the red garden, follow signs from BBQ area through carport and garage to the front of that house. For workshops in the pink garden, go through the rear gate next to the preserving shed into the carport area.**

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.