



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

Open Gardens South Australia

Welcomes you to Marybank Estate

Sunday 24th September, 2023

Welcome to Marybank Estate. The homestead and Barn were originally built in 1842 by colonist Thomas Shepherd Esquire from Scotland. A wealthy gentleman, a Draper and founding member of the Princess Royal Mining Company. The estate was named after his wife, Mary Murray from Tasmania. The Shepherds moved to London in 1853 and Arthur Fox, an Adelaide Auctioneer purchased the property and 1000 acres of land. The property has remained in the Fox family ever since.

The Homestead is designed in the Georgian Style with elegant French windows. The House and five acres of gardens are Heritage Listed and under the corrugated iron roof are the original red gum shingles. The Barn, originally built as stables is now a Wedding Venue with Luxury Accommodation on the upper level.

The federation garden at began as a practical one with an olive grove, fruit trees, vineyard and a kitchen garden. After many generations it has become a series of walks flanked by Italian Buckthorn hedges and planted with roses, hardy perennials and bulbs as this suits its Mediterranean Climate. It is unique for its hills face setting which provides vistas of Black Hill and the city of Adelaide. Large red gums provide a typical Australian backdrop to the rambling garden. The huge, very old red gum near the barn is hollow and home to countless birds and bees.

The house and garden are 179 years old, and it is easy to imagine the carriages drawing up on the gravel terrace, now a terraced front lawn and the ladies and gentlemen alighting for the Quadrille Party held at Marybank in 1871. In earlier days Marybank exported oranges to England and grew Grenache and Pedro Grapes for the nearby Stonyfell Winery.

Most of the garden layout is the work of Dora Fox (3rd generation) who cared for the garden from 1921 to 1995, while also introducing the beautiful lawned areas you see today. "The Far Garden" and its view looking back toward Black Hill was her favourite spot.

During the twentieth century, orange groves and fruit trees were pulled out, hundreds of bulbs were planted, iris, Belladonna lilies and jonquils being the most prolific and Ox Tongue lilies being the most unusual. Shrubs that suit our poor limestone soils are Cotoneasters and Abielias. Old fashioned climbing roses,

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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agapanthus, billy buttons, salvia, westringia, aloes, African daisy, pelargoniums also seem to love it here. It seems Jacarandas trees, the huge Golden Elm and Cypress Pines also thrive, ornamental pears & plums also feature throughout the garden.

In 1919 Marybank had grown to 1,000 acres but is now a more manageable 60. Best of all, it is still a working property. In 2006 Stuart Read from the Australian Garden History Society visited Marybank and identified two rare trees only found in colonial Gardens, they are Schinus Polygamus (Chilean Pepper tree) and Picconia Excelsa from the Canary Islands, (related to the olive tree). Both are very hardy and like much of the garden survive on rainfall only.

The garden has to be hardy, a legacy from the days when only the precious fruit trees and kitchen garden were watered in summer by gravity feed from a spring behind the barn. The spring dried up in 1915 and later water was pumped from Fifth Creek until that land was acquired by the government for the Black Hill Conservation Park in 1975. We also lost Foxes Dam to the National Park.

A bore was sunk in the late seventies and now water is pumped to a header tank on the hill and is used for the cattle and the garden. The interesting slate troughs on the property were used for water storage before concrete and corrugated iron tanks came into use.

The current 7-acre vineyard is planted with Shiraz grapes by Sue & Chris Lloyd (5th generation). Every year a portion of our grapes are sold to Penfolds at Magill Estate, and have been known to go into St Henri but in 2010 we were selected to go into Grange. Winemaking has been on and off here but with consistent vintages now made in 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 under our flagship 'Marybank Shiraz', we hope that this will continue.

Our current aim, Billy & Brie (6th generation) is to introduce an annual cutting garden to offer Dahlias, Zinnia, Cosmos, Amaranthus, Aster, Sunflowers & more to florists and Wedding clients plus add more native Australian flowers like Proteas while encouraging bird and insect life to the garden. We also want to create a productive kitchen garden, an orchard for produce, encourage regenerative gardening practices as well as making sure all our paths have a purpose and place. Please explore and enjoy!

Brie Lloyd



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.