



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

Open Gardens South Australia
Welcomes you to

6 Burra Gardens

Saturday 13th & Sunday 14th September, 2025

Boehm's Retreat

Morse Cottage

Somerset House

White Cedars

Ali's Garden - Ilased

Pip's Garden

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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Boehm's Retreat

I originally rented the property at 4 Mt. Pleasant Road and when it came up for sale in the early 1990s, I purchased it.

The original section of the house dates back to 1848, being one of the earliest residential properties built in the township of Burra. The house is of Georgian style architecture.

The land around the property consisted of an old chook run and chook shed, lots of rocks, wire and broken glass. No garden whatsoever.

I developed the garden in stages, tiering sections of the land and constructing blue stone retainer walls. I brought in composted cow manure obtained from a local dairy to fill all garden beds. This was necessary as the ground is mainly of limestone and bluestone with little topsoil, as the property is located on a hill.

I have built all blue stone retaining walls on the property.

At first, I planted a large area of lawn but due to water restrictions imposed, I had to redevelop areas in other ways.

I constructed a series of ponds, the water pumped from the lower larger pond to the top pond which when full, overflows into the middle pond which when full, overflows back to the large pond.

A section of the garden is dedicated to various roses. Other sections and garden beds are planted with bromeliads, polyanthus, aquilegias, snapdragons, ranunculus, poppies and primulas with shrubs throughout.

There are two sections of the garden planted with various coloured irises.

Trees throughout the garden are Golden Rain, Claret Ash and Eucalyptus.

The garden extends on the southern side of the property, planted with various daisies, sunflowers, Livingstone daisies and native shrubs.

The standard roses at the front and side of the house are Honey Dijon.

I have been successful in growing various plants under old gnarled Pepper trees.

Watering is done mainly by hand as I get to know and understand the needs of different plants.

My garden is a passionate, full time job, a great ongoing retirement project as I always look at future developmental ideas and possible changes to be made.

I look forward to meeting you and showing you my garden, which should be full of beautiful colours and interest.

Roger Boehm

Morse Cottage

The garden, in its present form, is about 3 and a half years old. We purchased the 1860s cottage at the end of 2021. The property not only offered us a weekend escape but an opportunity to establish a mostly native garden on a descent sized block. We had been looking in the Mid north for a weekender and new project. We had been to Burra to look at various properties but fell in love with this cottage. It had character, enough room and lots of potential for improvement. And of course, room for a new garden.

It was named Morse Cottage because of (unverified) reports that the bigger room had been used as a telegraph office in the old line to Alice Springs.

There were some existing trees on the property including a very magnificent old Fig, beautiful red Oleander and dying mature Almond tree, but the majority of the yard was open and mainly used for car parking. The old Almond was cut down as it was beyond saving. There was also a lawn around the clothes hoist which was kept.

We have filled the garden with mainly small Eucalyptus, Grevilleas, Eremophila, Correas and Callistemons. Generally, these start flowering September onwards and tend to extend into Summer. One of the stands out at this time of year are the grey Eremophilas (*Hygrophana*) and *Prostantheras*. We also developed a more immediately colourful area we have called the Mexican Zone. We have filled this with potted colour and painted Mexican Talavera pottery.

Some of the problems we encountered here included Limestone (alkaline) soils, severe frosts, low rainfall, compacted and rocky driveway soil, and strong winds. We brought in 18 tonnes of soils to build up mounds over compacted areas and what remained of a lawn and old tree trunk.

Overall, we wanted to create a special space to showcase some of our favourite plants in a colourful setting. Most of the plants selected were native, partly because of their tough nature and less reliance on water, but also because of their unique flower displays. Not all the plants were native. We have used pots of annuals to enhance colour in the garden. Some of the annuals are native wildflowers as in the broad area by the big Oleander.

To cover the broader area of the garden we used various forms of *Myoporum Parvifolium* for their ability to cover large areas quickly. They were also used for their frost and alkalinity tolerance. Although there were patches of lawn on the property we decided to use white gravel on the paths, driveway and under the pergola.

In the side area of the place, near the Trees of Heaven, we planted a local species of Native Pine (*Callitris*). This was meant to form a thicket/forest with interplanting of other species.

Another area that was meant to be a feature was near the pond. We planted 3 Bottle Trees (*Brachychiton Rupestris*). These were to form the backbone of another bed. Due to frost only one survived. We replaced the dead trees with small Eucalypts that have grown slowly.

Some shrubs showed yellowing due to alkaline soils. In the main this was corrected with Iron Chelates, sometimes needing reapplication. Only two plants (*Grevilleas*) were unresponsive to this and were sadly removed and replaced with more resistant species.

We hope you enjoy our garden as much as we do. It still has some growing and maturing to do and I'm sure there will be changes to be made in the future. Gardens should never be static!

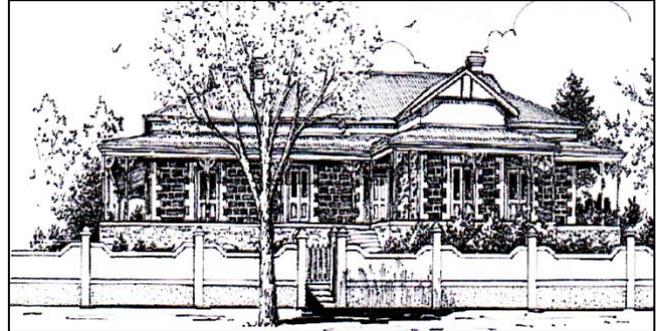
The gardens that open for us are chosen to reflect a great diversity of styles and may even challenge the conventional view of what constitutes a garden. While aspects of a garden may not be to your taste, we urge you to celebrate this diversity. Please remember you are visiting a private home and show respect and sensitivity for the owners who have so generously shared their garden with you. Thank you.

Somerset House

Somerset House was built by Frank and Richard Blight, Mid North farmers, in 1924.

The name "SOMERSET" was on the house when we purchased it 7 years ago. The name has been on the house for many years. Origin unknown. (Possibly the Blight brothers heritage from England!)

The house is set on a sloping 2520m² block, a short walk from the town centre.



We fell in love with the house and garden the moment we first viewed it, not to mention the beautiful township of Burra.

We added an extra 9 by 9 metre garage up the back and added some farm style gates to aid access for our caravan.

Over the years each owner has left a little bit of themselves in the garden, planting conifers, natives, hedges and succulents.

Many gardens on many levels were constructed, using local stone for retaining walls. Many are lined with small hedges.

We had never taken over an established garden before and appreciate the time and effort that previous owners put in. We've kept all that was healthy and added over time. Especially the magnificent wisteria on the front wall.

We have transformed the back half of the garden which was mainly weeds and dying apple trees. We built retaining timber walls to raise the garden with good soil so we could plant flowers and new fruit trees, in the process creating new pockets, as we call them, or secret gardens to explore.

We extended the stone wall height around the fishpond using stone found in our yard, and added pumps and fountain features to the pond.

Our lawns are struggling on minimal topsoil and need top dressing with good loam. But not until next summer!

We have planted many new plants, especially fruit trees. Two existing apple trees have come back to life. We have added another apple, apricot, fig, lime, cherry and two lemons.

Many small succulents create borders around the garden. They're thriving in Burra.

It has been quite challenging with Burra's frosts and drought conditions, not to mention the limestone base just below the surface. We need to use the jack hammer every time we plant something more substantial. Nevertheless, we would not change a thing. My theory is the more plants, the less weeds.

Keep planting!

Elfie and Jeff

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White Cedars

HISTORY

Built around 1848 during Burra's heyday as a copper mining town and saviour of South Australia's economy, the shop began life as a doctor's surgery and apothecary. Further on, Frederick Holder (later Sir Frederick), as Headmaster of the Burra School, took over the stationery shop from his father-in-law. Holder also edited the "Burra Record". After a time as Mayor, he went on to State Parliament where he had two periods as Premier (1892 & 1897-1901). His wife, Julia Stephens was State President of the Women's Temperance Union. They both strongly supported Women's Suffrage. From 1897-1898, he was a member of the Australian Federal Convention that framed the Commonwealth Constitution. In 1901 he was elected to Federal Parliament as the first Speaker of the House. In 1909 he collapsed and died on the floor of Parliament.

The shop has seen many incarnations and from 2006-2022, it operated as White Cedars Indonesian Restaurant. Since retirement it has been our home.

WHITE CEDARS

(Melia azaderach)

Many people query the name "White Cedars" but both of us being gardeners, a botanical name was beyond question. Our neighbouring road, Queen Street, has an avenue of white cedars so the name was obvious.

GARDENING BACKGROUND

Growing up in a natural environment in Bali, Putu is familiar with the culinary and medicinal plants of the tropics. As part of the original National Open Gardens scheme many enthusiasts visited my one-acre cottage and bush garden I established from a bare horse paddock at Willunga in the 1970's and 80's. A huge backlash prevented the 1860's cottage from being demolished, but sadly the garden is about to be sub-divided. My next garden adventure was a lush, tropical garden in Bali where we spent six years. It was exciting growing heliconias and the beautiful flowering banana. Harvesting my first pineapple was a day to remember!

THE GARDEN

A regular house block, it was a bit of a lumber yard, the previous owner being a mister-fix-it. A low wall framed a potential garden along the fence line. Other flower beds were made by scraping aside the gravel. Demolition of an old shed revealed 2 walls of a "Romantic Garden" and created a sheltered courtyard which I call "Mykonos" due to its blue window frame.

With temperatures ranging from -7°C to 45°C, hardy plants are the way to go. We first sourced quite a few plants from Lamberley's Nursery in Victoria. With a few exceptions we have really not had much success with roses. They do well for other Burra residents but NOT for us! Our favourite

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specimen is the white wisteria which is magnificent. It took 7 years to flower but now sets the scene for the whole garden.

For many visitors our most curious plant is our *Opuntia papyracantha*, (paper spine cholla cactus) from Argentina. The tiny little spines near the body of the plant are deadly for fingers. I've had my mother plant for over 30 years. (Friends baby-sat it whilst I was in Bali).

CONCLUSION

Being a gardener, one never knows where to stop so the traffic island in front of the café was an early inclusion. The white cedars on our side of Queen Street have been replaced, due to white ants, by a non-fruiting variety (less messy and a hazard to pedestrians). I have established flowerbeds around the bases of each tree to keep cars and caravans at bay.

Disaster struck in the recent high winds when our fence blew down and, a few days later, one courtyard wall collapsed leaving a huge mess. Not sure what stage we will be at, but we are happy to share our garden.

FRANCIS WALLING & I PUTU SUTA

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Ali's Garden - Ilased

The story of Ilased began in late 2004 when my then fiancé and I moved here after having managed the Innamincka Hotel for 3 years. We purchased the house while we were at Innamincka, Des flew down to look at a few properties, took heaps of photos and flew back to Innamincka where we made our choice. My only request was a house with lots of windows and a toilet separate from the bathroom! This was our first home together, so it was the beginning of an exciting adventure. And it was my first time living in a proper house in 10 years after having been working in remote jobs with live-in staff accommodation. The garden has just evolved along the way, I honestly didn't have a vision or plan or design for the garden, it's just kind of grown with us over the 20 years, with lots of learning, mistakes and success along the way.

What changes have we made?

Well out the front was an enormous pine tree, a row of agapanthus under the ash trees, a patchy lippia and couch "lawn", a large pampas grass and some cherry plum trees along northern fence. The pine tree was removed, the curved driveway and gravel followed. Pampas and Agapanthus removed and olives planted. I took out the cherry plum trees a couple of years ago after shade issues on solar panels.

Out the back is where the most change has happened.

The deck was built. The original sloping lippia lawn was replaced with a retainer wall and a level kikuyu lawn just in time for our son's 1st birthday in October 2006. The slate paving area in front of the bus was laid in replacement of another patchy patch of lippia. Plants that were here at the time of us moving here were the quince, the fig, cotoneaster, some diosmas, nandinas, pampas and ash trees. Sadly, the ash trees were causing damaged to underground tank so had to be removed. Quince, fig and cotoneaster remain but everything else has been replaced over the years and even some of those replacements have been replaced.

All the bluestone for the garden edging and retainer walls have come from the original house that was the manse for the neighbouring church. I'm not sure when the original house was demolished but this house was built in the early 50's as the State Bank manager's house. The small cellar next to the workshop had actually been filled in with stone and rubble from the original houses' demolition. A lot of time was spent digging and bucketing and lifting it all out to reveal the cellar.

My plant choices were/are based on surviving winters frosts and then the heat/dry in summer, surviving a dog who doesn't respect boundaries, surviving lack of attention from me as well as attracting bees and birds and providing colour and beauty. Not having high expectations am I!

I do have a few favourites that receive some extra attention, my hydrangeas, camellias and magnolias. Alstroemerias, peony poppies, ranunculus, foxgloves, sedums and larkspurs are more favourites. Oh, and I'm a sucker for succulents too.

Over the last 8 years I've been growing a native garden on the creek bank behind our property. Each birthday and anniversary of my late husband's death, I plant a native in his memory. I've had no success growing grevilleas but correas, eremophila's and acacias have been a great success.

Future plans and dreams for the garden?

I'd love to extend the deck and brick steps over the old sand pit area. And I want to upgrade the veggie garden beds with wicking beds.

Oh, and the name Ilased was my husband's idea, my name is Ali and his name is Des, spelt backwards is Ilased.

Thanks for visiting, hope you enjoy our little sanctuary.

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Pip's Garden

Welcome to Pip's Garden.

We moved here at the end of 2016 after having downsized from our two-acre cottage garden at Copperhouse Road in Burra North. When we purchased, we liked the (very!) bare bones of the garden – the crazy paved paths and layout of the front garden beds.

Apart from the front patch, a mature nectarine tree in the back corner, two woody buddleias, a white ceanothus by the front gate, a flowering quince and a few native trees, the rest of the garden was a blank canvas, covered in caltrop which we spent many hours digging out.

The corrugated iron fence along the southern side of the driveway was one of the first areas we wanted to plant. I used many cuttings which I had struck from our old garden, mainly succulents, lavenders, iris and artemisia. This year we removed an old Grevillia from the front of this driveway bed and I have been dividing chrysanthemums to plant in this space. I've added another lavender plant that popped up in the gravel and have planted some sweet peas in the hope they'll cover the fence and continue to self-seed in years to come.

We also planted a fig, a pomegranate, a lilac and another buddleia, as well as the ornamental pears. We had to replace the original buddleias as they grew woody and split.

This year we also decided to remove a flowering quince in the bed close to the veranda, as it was sending up suckers everywhere and threatening to take over! While I loved the vibrant flowers, I didn't love the suckers! So, there's been another gap to fill. Bluebells have started to multiply in this patch since then and an anisodonta is doing well. We've also planted a couple of native shrubs that we hope will fill gaps.

The white ceanothus by the front gate was removed and we've planted more roses along the front picket fence to fill in the space. I wasn't going to grow annuals again after two years of heart-breaking drought, but I've succumbed once more, as I do love violas and pansies and dianthus and petunias. Johnny Jump Ups I'm hoping will continue to self-seed. Our neighbours from White Cedars gave us cuttings of a blue Eremophila which has continued to multiply in this patch and provides beautiful grey and blue colour.

The wire fence running along the northern creek side of the house was built by local handyman, Shane Badman. We love the open look of it which has enabled us to keep our view of the stone wall across the creek and also to plant a wisteria, potato vine, ornamental grape vine and climbing roses.

Herbs are one of my favourite plants and I grow them wherever I can, both for cooking and for colour and scent. I try to have a biodiverse range of plants to encourage bees and have been delighted to see native blue banded bees in the garden.

The first tree we planted when we moved here was the prunus in the front patch. We've since planted a couple more as we love the blossoms in spring. I use catmint as borders and all the catmint in the garden comes from cuttings from Copperhouse Road.

The Back Patch

We put up garden arches to give a bit of height to the garden while waiting for trees to grow. I planted tulips and other bulbs around the trees and they have continued to multiply. Erigeron borders are a favourite also and I have been planting and subdividing hellebores along the back fence. Peony poppies, cornflowers and larkspurs self-seed in this patch and salvias and other shrubs fill in.

The Vegetable Patch and Chook Yard

When we moved in, we originally allowed the chooks to free range and, much as I love the idea, they do such damage in the garden that we reluctantly decided to fence them in. My brother and sister-in-law helped us build the hen house and Shane Badman built the wire run to stop them flying out! We use the straw from their bedding on the compost heap and we have continued to plant fruit trees, vegies and herbs in this patch as well as establishing raised beds. Our Girls are called, Esther, Eglantine and Darles Chickens.

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The Creek Garden

The creek banks were just weeds and clay when we moved and we have gradually planted up with a mix of ground covers and natives to stop erosion. **Take care if you want to do the creek walk** – it can be slippery if it rains (that hasn't happened much in the last few years) and the steps are very rustic!! For my 70th birthday back in 2020 the family gifted me a lot of native shrubs and came up and helped us plant them. Some have succumbed to drought – especially sad about a beautiful pimelea, Qualup Bell which we lost this year. Keeping the creek walk weed free is a nightmare!

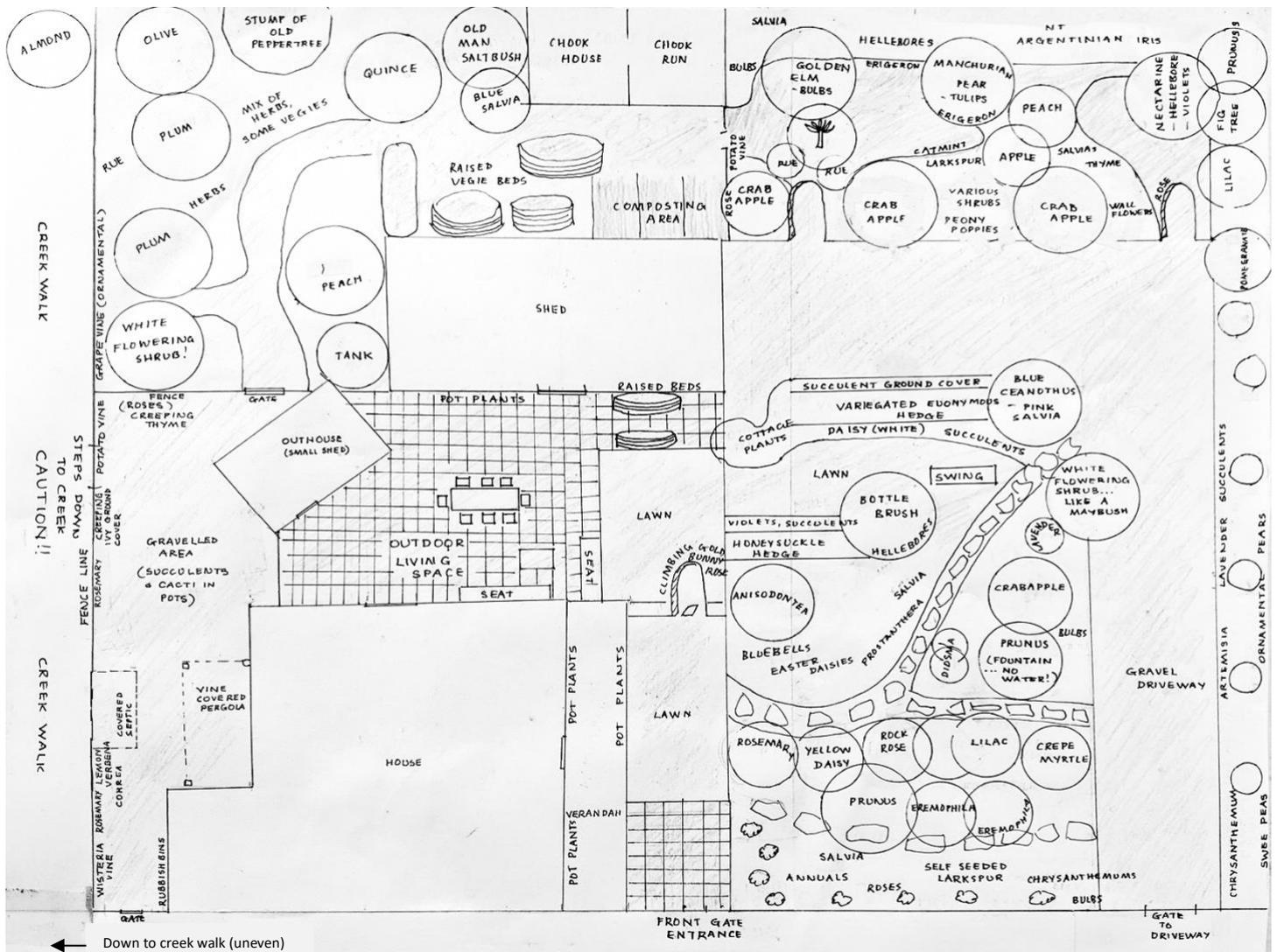
Also on the northern side of the house is my succulent and cactus potted garden.

We hope you will enjoy your visit as much as we enjoy sharing with you.

“Advice from a garden: cultivate lasting friendships; sow seeds of kindness; listen to sage advice; don't let things bug you; take thyme for yourself and ...no vining!”

And remember: God made rainy days so gardeners could get the housework done.

Pip and Peter Edson (he's in charge of watering!)



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