



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

Open Gardens South Australia

Welcomes you to St Githas Garden

Saturday 8th & Sunday 9th November, 2025

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

St Githas, with its majestic old trees, was best known as a wedding venue prior to our purchase in 2011 and its return to a private residence. The elegant Federation-style home was built in 1909 and used as a summer residence by an Adelaide physician. The small cottage adjacent to the main house was added in 1993.

A Pauline Hurren designed renovation was completed on the main house in December 2019, on a property that needed some TLC. As part of this process all verandas, roofing and some windows and doors were removed to leave a bare stone facade. A new glass conservatory, in the same Federation style, was added to the rear of the home and a bay windowed bathroom to the northern end.

GARDEN DESIGN

The **two-acre** garden was restored in 2020, and the new award-winning design by Sphere Landscape Design now blends formality and contemporary English country style, generating visual impact whilst harmonising with the classic architecture of the home. Construction work was undertaken in two parts by Garden Partner with the back garden completed in December 2019 and the front in October 2020. Any additional works or maintenance issues are dealt with by Urban Regen.

The planting is in parts formal and elsewhere an exuberant mix of perennials, bulbs and flowering plants. Roses are everywhere, filling the garden beds and entwined with clematis and wisteria over the arbours and climbing obelisks. Giant old oak and pine trees frame the property and create protected areas where shade-loving plants thrive.

Throughout the garden, long, wide paths of varying-sized pavers make a bold statement that emphasises the design and layout. Hedges play a role in creating a green framework that retains its good looks into the winter months. The garden has been designed to provide scope to grow a varied selection of plants that offer successive flowering and year-round interest.

GARDEN TRANSFORMATION

In the design we wished to define a clear entrance to the property that would direct visitors to the front door. The front garden is now quite formal with a classic white Federation wooden gate, styled on the eaves of the home, leading through a camelia hedge. Box lined garden beds border a lawn area. Plants in these beds include lilac, penstemon, salvia, perovskia, raphiolepis, gaura, delphinium, yarrow and euphorbia. Basalt steppers lead across the lawn to a gravel path and slate steps that guide visitors to the front door and enclosing verandas. A raised garden bed containing Rosa 'Gertrude Jekyll', lavender, bearded iris, salvia, foxgloves, gaura and verbena lines the front verandah. A number of Little Gem magnolias throughout the central lawn areas provide an avenue which draws the eye along the length of the front garden and highlights a James Hamilton steel sculptured leaf that sits in a small garden room with a red garden bench.

The greatest challenge faced for the landscape design was the slope across the rear of the block which, although relatively gentle for the Adelaide Hills, required significant retaining. Once council approval was granted this retaining wall allowed for extensive formal gardens to be developed at the rear of the house, to complement the existing oak tree, and included a central fountain and wisteria covered stone arbours either side of the garden.

The beds in the rear garden contain mass plantings of roses interspersed with perennials that include catmint, lavender, daylilies, foxgloves, delphiniums, Japanese windflowers, sedum, gaura, salvia, penstemon, bearded iris and hebe. The arbours are lined by a row of crab-apples and evergreen hedging magnolias.

The formal wisteria covered stone arbours on either side of the rear garden also add formality and leads one to a large three tier brass fountain at the rear of the garden where seating provides an extremely relaxing area to enjoy a drink at the end of the day and listen to the running water and watch the playful bird life.

VEGETABLE GARDEN AND ORCHARD

On the southern side of the garden is an enormous, wire covered enclosure that houses 12 raised wicking beds filled with organically grown vegetables, and an orchard. The wire enclosure provides much needed protection for the plants from rabbits, possums and cockatoos and was constructed in 2021. Beautiful small silver-eyes and fairy wrens however can pass through the wire netting and gorge on the produce! A family of the marsupial antechinus don't mind wondering through from time to time also.

Each of the 4m x 1m long concrete sleeper wicking beds are used for organically grown seasonal vegetables in addition to more permanent raspberries, strawberries, blueberries, black currents, red currents and asparagus.

The small orchard contains a range of organically grown fruits, some espaliered, including: apricots, peaches, mulberries, apples, pears, figs, kiwi fruit, avocado, cherries, quince and grapes.

A range of citrus trees (lemons, mandarin, lime, kumquat, blood orange, finger lime) together with olives, macadamias and walnut trees are scattered around the periphery of the 2 acre garden.

A large 3 bay timber compost bin sits at the back of the vegetable garden and provides much needed compost for all areas of the garden.

Retaining across the eastern end of the enclosure and a rainwater tank was added this year and herbs relocated to this sunny position.

Welcome to St Githas and we hope you enjoy our English country style cottage garden as much as we do.

Paul & Ruth



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.