



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

# Open Gardens South Australia

## Welcomes you to

# 'Still Water' Quince Fair

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2024

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Welcome to 'Still Water'; a large, sprawling country garden built around towering natural River Red Gum trees. Originally designed by Mary Skene-Kidman in 1959, the present custodians and owners are Rick Paltridge and Cathy Hughes and together they have each impacted the evolving garden in very personal ways.

### The front driveway

As you enter 'Still Water' you walk through the recently built entranceway made of Mount Gambier stone, with an Eastern Cottonwood on either side. The stone wall, like all the stonework on the property, has been crafted by Rick and styled directly on the work of Frank Lloyd Wright - the renowned 20th-century architect.

As you walk down the driveway you will pass a planting of deciduous trees to the right, all chosen for their autumnal colours. Included are Golden Ash 'Aurea', *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* 'Cimmzam' Cimmaron Ash, maples, a Flowering Pear, a Chinese Pistachio (*Pistacia chinensis*) and a Chinese elm.

If you look to the left, the main part of the park garden opens up and includes a vista full of various elms, ash trees, Twisted (Corkscrew) Willows and oaks - including two Pin Oaks, and a Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*) with its distinctive holly shaped leaves. We've recently planted Gleditsia 'Sunburst' near the larger wetland, and Gleditsia 'Ruby Lace' towards the roadside. There is a fenced circular grove of young Golden Rain Trees, (*Koelreuteria paniculata*) that Rick propagated, along with naturally occurring red gum seedlings (that will eventually be thinned).

All the garden sculptures have been designed and/or made by Rick, and are often born of his curiosity to test out an idea.

As you step across the covered grate through the second stone wall, the treescape to the left is known as The Shrubbery. It's the oldest part of the garden and strongly reflects Mary's plant selections, colour schemes and garden design - with Edna Walling influences at play. One element evident in The Shrubbery is the over-planting of trees, creating a strong sense of enclosure and intrigue. Curved pathways add to the unfolding garden spaces, with the original Golden Rain Tree, Magnolia, *Viburnum Tinus Laurustinus*, several Lilacs and Guelder Roses, and when flowering, a very aromatic *Philadelphus* (Mock Orange), among several other tree varieties, under-planted with clivias, alstroemerias, *acanthus mollis*, and shade-loving begonias.

As you walk around the bend, the garden opens up, framing the 60-year-old weatherboard house. Standing sentinel-like to the north of the house is a London Plane Tree (*Platanus Orientalis*) that is still growing strongly after 20 years.

Cathy has converted the original mass iris plantings and rose plantings into two connected perennial borders to the north and west of the house as a way of adding colour, texture and interest (both have been heavily mulched to deter the native bush rats taking up residence). Though many plants and bulbs in the borders have now finished their Spring-Summer flush (hence the gaps) they've been selected as part of an evolving blue, pink and white colour scheme. Salvias, lavenders, penstemons, valerian, and euphorbias predominate, with the spreading *Rosa rugosa* 'Scabrosa' a favourite rose that flourishes here. Grey plants like *Artemisia* 'Powis Castle' (mugwort), lamb's ears, *Euphorbia* 'Silver Swan' and swathes of catmint along the garden edges provide interesting counterpoints and a welcome sparkle - especially in late spring.

The western border is framed by the original 'tapestry hedge'; so-called for the colourful mix of flowering plants, including quite a few red, white and pink flowering quinces (*Chaenomeles*) and the classic blue plumbago. The hedge is being extended to the south with more plants. One of Cathy's favourite roses is an old-fashioned tea rose called 'Monsieur Tillier', and there are three at the end of the new hedge.

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**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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On the western side of the house, the rose climbing over the wooden arbour is 'Crepuscle', with two older plants on the outside, and two-year-old plants on the inside (unfortunately our local possums love roses). Nearby, the three Ginkgo biloba, along with three variegated elms, were planted about 13 years ago. The three Silver Birch trees honour Rick's now adult children. The purple-leafed 'Hyon' crab apple produces gorgeous red fruits with red-blushed flesh in late summer.

On the far western side of the house is a second, smaller park garden that Rick planted nearly 30 years ago - with only a tree guard around each plant to protect them from grazing cattle. About six years ago the area was fully fenced, and the lawn was planted, along with a Kurrajong tree (*Brachychiton populneus*), Chinese Pistachio, and the Crab Apple 'Royal Raindrops' not long after.

The stone extension to the house, which we call The Pavilion, was designed and made by Rick. It took two-and-a-half years to complete. The courtyard features a single *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* 'Urbanite' that will eventually grow to be 11 m x 8 m wide. The small garden area to the north features a 'John Downie' crab apple under-planted with Hebe 'Pretty N Pink'.

### Other appealing features of the garden include:

- Two connected wetland areas were designed to help support the native ecosystem of birds, insects and wildlife. The larger wetland was originally a natural swamp that was landscaped with excess plants from the garden in 2011.
- About 17 peacocks/peahens roam freely – although they may be less inclined to appear this weekend with a large crowd!

### The Quince Orchard

The focus of this weekend is the ancient quince fruit. Historic records suggest it may have been growing for over 5,000 years.

Our quince orchard was started in 2013 and has been added to as varieties became available. It now boasts all 16 known varieties of *Cydonia oblonga* growing in Australia (though 100 years ago there were at least 40 named varieties - though not all commercially grown).

All are grown on dwarfing or semi-dwarfing rootstock and were sourced from three heritage fruit tree nurseries (in Tasmania and Victoria). They've been espaliered for easier managing of annual tasks: pruning, picking fruit, pest and weed control, as well as fertilizing. The ducks help with pest control and live permanently in the orchard – which also doubles as a peachick nursery between January and April.

While the orchard is fully netted, the use of wire netting on the lowest level was a way of maximizing the required space for 100 trees, while allowing access to our farm ute. It's an "experimental orchard" where mistakes are an important part of learning about quinces. For example, some trees will show what untreated pear slugs can do to leaves.

### Event details

**Food and refreshments** are located in/or near The Pavilion, or opposite the Plane tree in front of the house. **Other regional stallholders** are located in the western park area or near the wetland.

Cathy will conduct **tours of the quince orchard** throughout each day, while **Rick will hold two demonstrations a day** to showcase how he makes the stone wall features in the garden.

**Need help?** Just ask one of our friendly volunteers located near The Pavilion. They are wearing red aprons.

**A Visitors Book** will be located in The Pavilion.

For the latest updates about this event visit [www.quincehq.com.au](http://www.quincehq.com.au) where you can also sign up for our monthly newsletter or Facebook page.

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.