



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

Open Gardens South Australia Welcomes you to Topsy Hill

Saturday 8th & Sunday 9th February, 2025

It's hard to believe that nearly nine years have flown by since our family settled into the picturesque Topsy Hill. This charming property became more than just a weekend retreat—it transformed into our beloved family home. Previously cherished as a getaway by Margaret and Christopher Burrell, Topsy Hill has undergone quite a metamorphosis under our care, reflecting the rhythms and needs of daily life.



One of our earliest additions was a vegetable and herb garden close to the house—a nod to our passion for cooking. More recently, we took a bold step by installing a stunning infinity pool along the east side of the house. This addition, completed just last year, turned what was once a steep and sunbaked slope into a luxurious oasis. While we did consider terracing the area for more garden beds, the pool ultimately won out (though it did cost nearly four times as much as a retaining wall!). That said, we still carved out a small terraced space nearby for herbs and veggies,

ensuring practicality wasn't entirely overshadowed by indulgence.

For those who visited Topsy Hill during its Open Gardens South Australia events in March 2015 or 2021, you might notice a host of changes since then. Our commitment to sustainability and conservation has been a guiding principle, inspired in no small part by my grandmother, Dr. Barbara Hardy AO, whose contributions to South Australia's environmental efforts continue to inspire us. Following her example, we've reduced the garden's water consumption by about 25% by grouping plants based on water needs, relocating them to more suitable spots, and introducing hardy native species that thrive in our climate.

Another practical yet impactful improvement was the addition of a dedicated firewood store next to the garage. This freed up much-needed space for our ever-expanding collection of gardening tools and supplies, making it easier to maintain the grounds.

As you approach Topsy Hill, one of the most noticeable changes is the transformation of the driveway. The 60 Pencil Pines that once lined it have been replaced by resilient Lilly Pillies, better suited to handle our climate and less susceptible to pests like borers. The Lemon-scented gums (*Corymbia citriodora*) planted in 2020 to replace the Pencil Pines in the carpark area have flourished, adding a delightful fragrance to the air, especially after rain.

Elsewhere, we've continued to fine-tune the garden by moving plants to locations where they can truly thrive. Opposite the garage, for instance, the Shasta daisies we relocated have burst into vibrant bloom and the Pencil Pines that had succumbed to stress and pests have also been removed from this area. We've continued to open up the garden, either thinning or lifting larger plants or removing those past their prime, this has created clearer sightlines and inviting glimpses into other sections of the garden.

Building on Margaret's original vision of themed colour groupings, we've introduced playful touches like the 'Barbie' garden near the south lawn, where shades of pink flowers dominate. This thematic approach adds charm and cohesiveness to the landscape while celebrating colour and creativity.

Looking ahead, we have even more plans in store. The 'Topsy Imperial Concubine' roses will soon be relocated to the more sheltered 'Smoke Tree' garden, where the conditions are gentler. In its place, we plan to expand our native plantings, continuing to embrace species that are not only beautiful but also sustainable in our dry climate.

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.

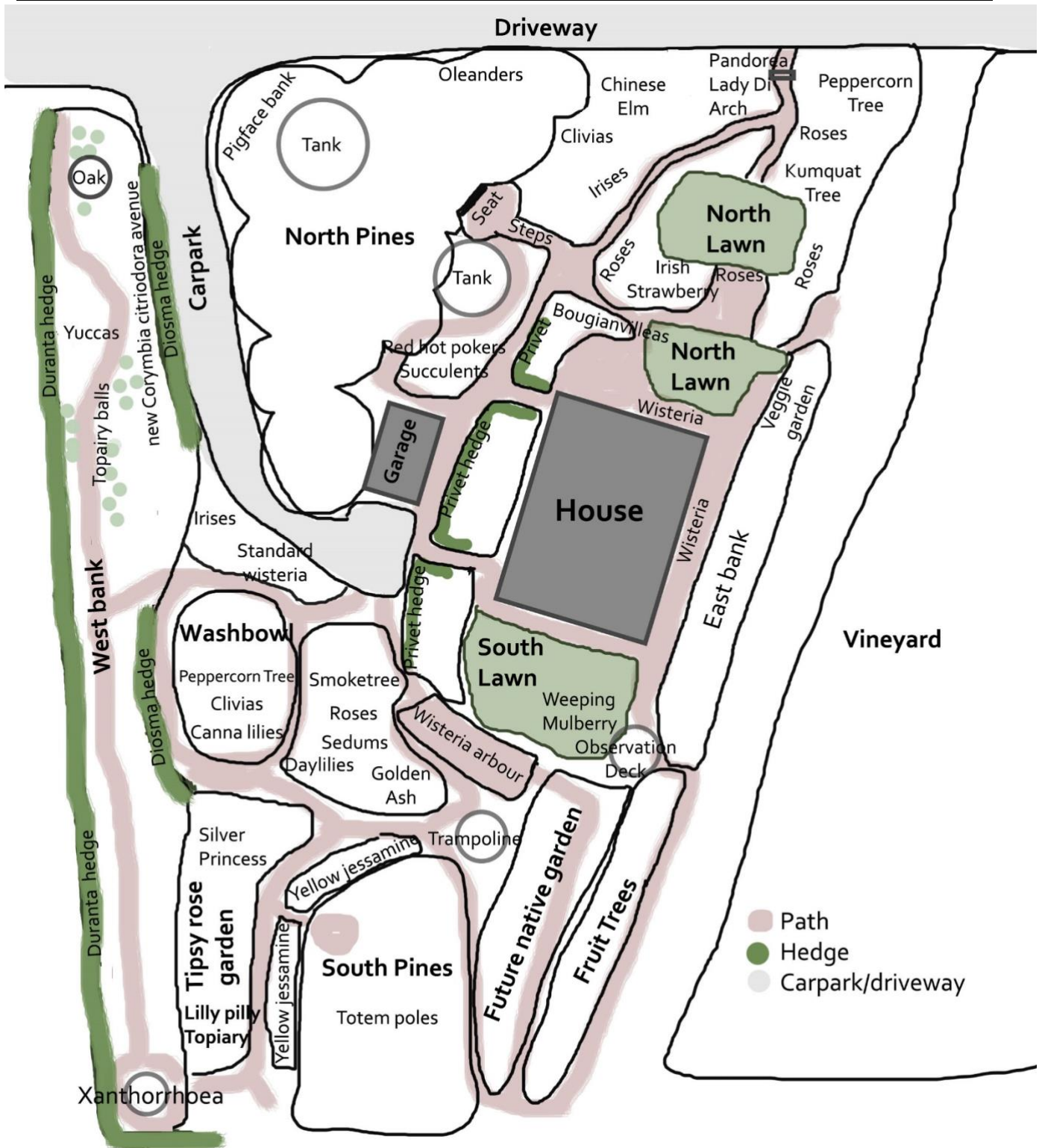
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As Topsy Hill continues to evolve, we hope it remains a source of inspiration, relaxation, and joy for all who visit. Whether you're seeing it for the first time or returning after a few years, we invite you to explore, enjoy, and experience the story that our garden tells.

All the best,
Bec Hardy



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.