



Autumn Newsletter 2024



Autumn Flowering Bulbs – Belladonna Lilies

Welcome Autumn! While many of our gardens look at their spectacular best in Spring, Autumn is the favourite time of the year for many people – including many gardeners! The seasonal breaking rains and cooler conditions in Autumn are a welcome relief. Our Autumn open garden program includes some familiar favourites as well as some gardens new to Open Gardens SA. We hope you will visit and find some inspiration and enjoy the gardens. Our Newsletter, as always, includes some interesting articles which we hope you will enjoy. Happy reading!

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Autumn 2024 Open Gardens

March 02 - 03 2024

The Big Little Garden -
Aldgate

March 09 – 10, 2024

Frosty Flats - Birdwood

March 23 – 24

Seachange Retreat – Port
Lincoln

April 13 – 14

Still Water Quince Fair -
Penola

April 13 – 14

Three Gums - Hazelwood
Park

April 20 – 21

Wyndbourne Park -
Forest Range

April 27 – 28

Etre Garden - Willunga

**See details of the full
program on our website:**

<http://opengardensa.org.au/>



New Administration Support for OGSA

Open Gardens SA has recently had a change in the role of our Administration Officer. After nearly 7 years Sonia Green decided to retire at the end of February 2024 and Dave Simms has stepped into the role.

Our garden owners will have had many conversations and interactions with Sonia over the years. Sonia was always cheerful and helpful in assisting the garden owners as well as providing an enthusiastic service to the committee. The Open Gardens SA committee would like to thank Sonia for all her good work over the past 7 years and wish her all the very best for her future endeavours.

A number of our garden owners and members will have already had contact with Dave Simms and we all look forward to working with Dave into the future.

Dave can be contacted by email at info@opengardensa.org.au



Open Gardens SA - Garden Visiting Protocols

It's a privilege to be able to open private gardens to the public, and the garden owners are extremely generous in allowing people into their gardens. A great deal of consideration goes into preparing the garden descriptions and other information which is posted on our website and provided to the media to promote the open gardens. The descriptions provide an accurate insight into what visitors can expect to see when they visit an open garden, as well as information on any extra attractions or activities which may be available.

Not every garden will appeal to every visitor and we hope that visitors would still be able to appreciate the garden design or the hard work involved in preparing an open garden, even if a particular garden is not to their personal taste.

Open Gardens SA welcomes feedback, so if you have a concern about a particular garden please contact us to discuss your issue – please do not post negative or inappropriate comments on social media as this could be very distressing for a garden owner and there may be legitimate circumstances which explain the concern you have identified.

To retain the goodwill of garden owners there are a few considerations and courtesies we ask visitors to be mindful of when visiting the private gardens we open to the public.

Open Days: Gardens are only open on the dates specified.

Fire Cancellation: Garden openings will be CANCELLED in fire rating districts on days which are declared as "Catastrophic".

Privacy of the Garden Opener: Remember that you are visiting private property so please do not enter the house unless you invited to do so.

Etiquette in the garden:

Please do not remove any part of any plant from the garden. To identify a plant, take the person to the plant, not the plant to the person. Keep to paths to avoid trampling on plants. Please ensure you take away with you anything you brought into the garden and please do not litter. Please don't create or encourage loud noise in the garden.

Children: While we encourage children, please ensure children are well supervised and that their behaviour does not distract from the quality of the experience of other visitors.

Dogs: No dogs (except Guide or Assistance dogs) are permitted in the gardens unless the "dogs on leash permitted" icon is shown on our website. If dogs are permitted, they must be on a leash and be under the control of the owner at all times.

Car Parking: Please park your car so that others can enter and leave the parking area without inconvenience. Park safely and legally.

Photography: Please check that the owner is happy for you to photograph the garden before doing so. Photographs taken in the garden should not be used for commercial purposes without prior permission of the garden owner.

Icons: Gardens suitable for wheelchairs and pushers and gardens with toilet facilities will display these icons on our website garden listing.

Blue Sky Theatre – *The Government Inspector* was another great hit.

Blue Sky Theatre’s production of *The Government Inspector* in the Garden was a popular sell-out season once again in January.

The new adaptation of Nikolai Gogol’s classic comedy set the story in 1937 on a small Greek island, where the corrupt mayor learns that an undercover inspector is coming to investigate how his town is run. The badly behaved officials decide to shower him with food, wine and a good time but eventually realise they’ve been bribing the wrong man.



The spirited portrait of a small man with a big ego generated lots of laughs from the audience, who found it hard to believe this play was written nearly two hundred years ago. Each night, there were many groans at the

story’s familiarity. Clearly, people in power have not changed much in almost two centuries!

As usual, the costumes and the cast’s performances were of a high standard, the band and the singing were entertaining, and everyone was complimentary about the show.

In general, the season was a delight – many of the shows were on balmy evenings, with the audience enjoying a picnic with a drink from the bar before watching the show as the sun went down.

However, such is the unpredictability of South Australia’s weather these days that things weren’t so calm on several occasions.

At the new venue in Second Valley, 90km winds literally threw everything into chaos, and the team cancelled that performance for safety reasons.

Many thanks to Wendy Pember at Second Valley Farm and her team, who constructed a straw bale windbreak for the following evening. That fixed the wind, but it didn’t deter the Corellas. Hundreds of them decided it was fun to join in, and their deafening cries certainly tried everyone’s patience. They seemed especially vocal every time someone in the story fired a gun. Who knew?



Three shows at Hans Heysen’s The Cedars in Hahndorf were popular, and the garden setting was stunning.

In the final week, Blue Sky tried to put on an additional show to compensate for the cancelled performance. The team set up at Wittunga Botanic Garden in the pouring rain and eventually had to admit defeat and cancel that show, too. 38mm fell in one day. You wouldn’t read about it.

The final weekend was a complete delight, reminding everyone that outdoor theatre in stunning gardens with fantastic weather is a beautiful experience.



The season was sold out as early as December, demonstrating the audience’s enthusiastic support for theatre in the garden each year. Blue Sky Theatre and Open Gardens SA are also grateful for Howards Wines and Matthews Hospitality’s sponsorship.

Plans are already in train for more outdoor theatre in 2025. Let’s hope for more settled weather next time.

Presented by Blue Sky Theatre Productions and Open Gardens SA.



OGSA Recommends...

We recommend you always check our website to confirm garden opening details prior to visiting. The website is an up-to-date, reliable and informative site which lists each open garden with a description of the garden, address (including a map), photographs, the availability of refreshments etc. The official Garden Notes written by the garden owner are also provided which you can read in advance or print and take a copy with you for your garden visit. Importantly, our website will always list any late additions or cancellations to our garden opening program.

<http://opengardensa.org.au/>

OGSA 2024 Autumn Calendar

Entry Fee \$10 per Adult, Limited Concessions available, Under 18 free. We encourage visitors to bring cash as EFTPOS facilities may not always be available.

March 2024

02 - 03 March

The Big Little Garden - 3 Andrewartha Place, Aldgate

09 - 10 March

Frosty Flats - 2891 Onkaparinga Valley Road, Birdwood

23 - 24 March

Seachange Retreat - 57 New West Road, Port Lincoln

April 2024

13 - 14 April

Still Water Quince Fair - 344 Krongart Road, Penola

13 - 14 April

Three Gums - 2 Seaforth Avenue, Hazelwood Park

20 - 21 April

Wyndbourne Park - 258 Mawson Road, Forest Range

27 - 28 April

Etre Garden - 10 Delaney Avenue, Willunga



Frosty Flats - Birdwood



Seachange Retreat - Port Lincoln



Still Water Quince Fair - Penola



Three Gums - Hazelwood Park



Wyndbourne Park - Forest Range



Etre Garden - Willunga



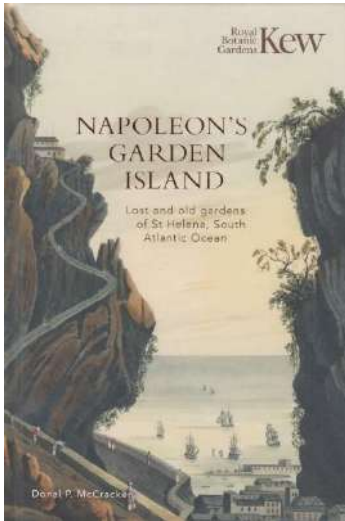
The Big Little Garden - Aldgate



NAPOLEON'S ISLAND GARDEN

by Donal McCracken, Kew-Royal Botanic Gardens, 2023.

Book Review By Trevor Nottle.



transit from Asia to Europe following shifts in British foreign policy after the Napoleonic Wars.

Napoleon, his retinue of courtiers, servants and guards were to be held under conditions of severe isolation, strict security and yet in a state of respect and consideration for his Imperial status. The problem for the British Governor was where? Which of the few substantial mansions could be bought, repaired, altered and enlarged to accommodate the Scourge of Europe and his staff? Which estate was large enough to hold the garrison of guards and officers charged with keeping the escapee of Elba securely confined. And what special conditions would the 'Frenchie' demand as he faced up to a lifetime of confinement on a very remote island?

After an unsettled period spent searching for a suitable setting and house and gearing up the whole community to respect the security and privacy of their guest the government had to deliver quickly a moderately luxurious but not palatial residence for the Emperor in exile. This was managed within a limited budget and the Governor, and his staff waited with bated breath for the Emperor to say what special conditions he needed for his comfort and leisure. As it turned out all Napoleon wanted was a garden. Not just any garden but a garden of a scale and scope that was appropriate to his majestic entitlements. By commandeering the force of guards and other military staff and all the available horses and bullocks the land was cleared, and levels established that would give the Little Man the scope to engage his imagination and create a substantial garden and landscape despite a general shortage of water on the island.

While most readers will have some basic facts about Napoleon and his exile to St Helena it is the details of what that entailed which is established in the text of this new book. Against a background of a

growing Empire and its changing administration a garden grows. It is quite a story and even has an Australian connection.



Open Gardens SA Seasonal Program

The full listing of our autumn open gardens with all the details and beautiful photographs is available on our website:

<http://opengardensa.org.au/>

Our aim is to promote the enjoyment, knowledge, and benefits of gardens and gardening in the South Australian community, and to build strong public support for the development of gardens across the state.



Looking After Your Gardening Tools

Information sourced in house and from the Internet.

Gardening tools are clearly an essential requirement for working in the garden – and good tools can make to job much easier and more enjoyable. When you are purchasing new gardening tools, you will probably have a choice of low price/low quality or higher priced/high-quality tools.

Quality tools are designed to last many years, but they must

be cared for and regularly maintained.

Regardless of the quality, maintaining your garden tools on a regular basis will help to assure that they will be ready to go to



work on your next garden task. Following a few basic rules will add many years of life and use to all of the tools which were designed to make your gardening tasks easier.

- Always remove all of the soil from your digging tools after each use. Usually, hosing is all it takes but use a screwdriver or wire brush to remove caked or dried mud.
- Never put your tools away wet. Allow them to dry completely before storing to prevent rusting and handle rot. Once each garden season, rub linseed oil into your wooden handles to help preserve them.
- After each use wipe the metal parts of pruners, shears, and loppers with an oily rag. Alternately, you can wipe your tools dry with a clean rag, and then spray lightly with a penetrating oil such as WD40®.
- Sharpen your cutting tools as well as the blades of shovels and spades during the gardening season. A hone or whetstone should be used for sharpening cutting tools. A file should be used to remove nicks and smooth the edge of your shovels and trowels.
- Thoroughly clean any tools which have been used for chemical applications. Fertilisers and other chemicals can rapidly corrode any metal parts.
- For extra rust prevention fill a bucket with builders' sand and pour approx., 4 cups of new motor oil over it. Use this as a shovel cleaner/oiler each time you put your tools away. Plunge each tool in and out the oily sand several times after use. You can also use this bucket as a shovel stand.

Servicing and storing your garden tools is an important part of ensuring they stay in good condition and last for years to come. Regular cleaning and oiling will prevent rust, keep them sharper and help the handles stay solid and strong. Wet and heavy soil left on a spade will lead to rust. When the blade is rusty and not smooth, more moisture and soil sticks to the blade, making digging even more difficult. Ideally you should clean your tools after each use.



How To Clean a Spade.

Safety first! Wear gloves, goggles and dust mask when working on tools. Remove any dry soil with a stiff wire brush. Give your blade and handle a good scrubbing with water to remove any remaining mud and grit. Dry with old towels and leave them to dry overnight to avoid trapping in any moisture.

Sand wood handles to remove any splinters or chips in the finish.

Use a metal file to lightly sharpen the edge of the blade. The key is to give it a nice clean edge. Beware not to grind away too much of the metal.

Lubricate the blade with vegetable oil rubbing the oil into the blade in a circular motion and wipe off any excess oil. The oil will prevent rust.

Add several coats of Danish oil to wooden handles, making sure to let previous coats fully dry before applying next coat. If your handle is metal, brush off as much rust as possible and paint 2 coats of enamel paint.

Hang up your tools rather than standing them on their edges.

Vintage Tools.

If possible, hunt out old / vintage garden tools – the ones your parents or grandparents used. These can be of a higher quality than many of the new products available today – particularly if your budget doesn't allow the purchase of the top of the

range tools. Old garden tools may be in the back of the shed gathering dust, or they can be found on auction sites, second hand shops, farm clearing sales etc. A bit of time spent cleaning, sharpening, or repairing these garden tools could be rewarded with the best tools you have ever owned.

A quick Google search will identify lots of videos, helpful information and handy hints! So, on the next day you can't work in the garden, spend some time inspecting your gardening tools, clean and repair as appropriate and then the ongoing maintenance will become more satisfying and less time consuming!



Plant Profile: Colchicum

By Trevor Nottle. Photos Di Michalk.

Known as Autumn Crocus and Meadow Saffron from ancient times this group of plants are more properly known as Colchicum. Gathered from wild places for centuries by herbalists, monks and healers they were considered as part of the natural pharmacopeia. Used with care and knowledge their poisonous qualities could be ameliorated and adapted to make simple remedies. According to John Gerard (1597) mashed up corms of Colchicum could be made into a poultice that would soothe rheumatic aches and pains, and for treating gout. They were also aware of its poisonous nature and advised those seeking help to drink plenty of milk to reduce the impact of the poison should they ingest any part of it.



It was not until the 19th C that people, including gardeners and plant collectors began to take a more enthusiastic approach to growing Colchicums in their gardens as decorative autumn flowering plants. At first it was commonly believed that Colchicums grew in a manner that was the reverse of other plants *ie.* the flowers came first followed by the leaves, but

we now understand this is not the case. As usual the leaves appear first and the flowers come later, after the corms have had a long rest between the two events. In the case of Colchicums, the leaf clusters are quite large and somewhat irregular with a tendency to become floppy as they age, so it is smart to bear this in mind when planting them in a mixed border or heavily planted garden – the can smother small nearby plants.



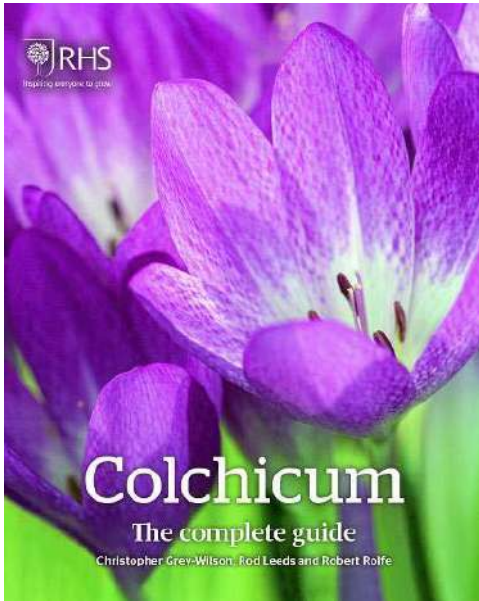
Colchicums are mostly found in Italy, Greece and Turkey, and adjacent countries where conditions similar to damp pastures are found. With care to their planting, they can be successfully cultivated in gardens in South Australia; they prefer a long dry resting period over our Summer in conditions which protect them by other nearby plants from being roasted by the sun. Good drainage is also a prerequisite for good growth and flowering. The plants are rarely troubled by pests or diseases and do not need annual lifting, drying, storing etc. Light foliar feeding or liquid fertiliser will encourage bulb growth and multiplication.



As a general rule, Colchicums do not increase speedily. Expect one corm to become three or four in five years or so. And hold back on heavy feeding in hope of bulking up

corn numbers quickly. There is a definite risk of overdoing it and encouraging 'soft' growth that rots as the weather warms the soil in Summer.

Despite there being some 105 species reported by modern authorities those found commonly in gardens, and nursery lists, are limited to a handful of species and a few selected cultivars. Availability varies from year to year and some desirable kinds are to be found only in the hands of private specialist growers.



Colchicum agripinum, *Colchicum variegatum*, *C. autumnale*, *C. byzantinum*, and *C. speciosum* are by far the most frequently seen species in Australian gardens. Flowers are generally lilac pink sometimes with checkerboard patterns of light and dark colours. There are also rarer varieties that are white single and double, and a large double pink called 'Waterlily'.

A handy, if expensive reference book is *COLCHICUM, The complete Guide*, by Christopher Grey-Wilson, Rod Leeds and Robert Rolfe, Royal Horticultural Society, London, 2020.



Adelaide Hills Garden Affair – Sunday 05 May 2024

Please Note: This is Not an Open Gardens SA Hosted Event.

For further information visit the Adelaide Hills Garden Affair website at: <https://www.adelaidehillsgardenaffair.au/> or Email: adelaidehillsgardenaffair@gmail.com

Adelaide Hills Garden Affair is based in the heart of the Adelaide Hills, South Australia. This Not-for-Profit organization has been developed by a small group of representatives of some Hills Garden Clubs and Plant Societies with a common vision to create an annual Adelaide Hills Garden Event.

Date: Sunday 5th May 2024, 10am to 3 pm.

Venue: Stangate House and Gardens, corner Edgeware and Euston Roads, Aldgate, South Australia.

Adelaide Hills Garden Affair welcomes you to this not-to-be-missed inaugural gardening event. Featuring all things gardening, this special one-day event is set amongst the historic Stangate House and Gardens in Aldgate, coinciding with spectacular autumn colour of the Adelaide Hills.



Do you love gardening? Want to know more? This event is your opportunity to learn from experts, make connections, feed your curiosity and increase your gardening know-how. Learn from an informative line-up of speakers, including special guest Angus Stewart, former presenter for Gardening Australia.

You will be able to buy a range of plants from Garden Clubs, Plant Societies and Specialist Nursery stalls alongside garden suppliers, garden decor and much more. Peruse the stalls, join a tour of the gardens, a line-up of expert speakers; children's

activities - there is much to enjoy. Enjoy demonstrations and activities for the whole family. Tickets are limited so get in early!

Tickets are \$15 pp (children under 15 free, but tickets still need to be booked). Tickets available through Trybooking or the Adelaide Hills Garden Affair website, there are only 1,500 tickets available. Free parking.



The inaugural one-day Garden Affair event in autumn 2024 will be a welcoming environment that will connect gardeners and plant lovers with Gardening Clubs, Plant Societies,

organisations and Garden or Horticultural Businesses. This is an opportunity to take a drive through the Adelaide Hills at this beautiful time of the year and enjoy the historical gardens of Stangate House set in the village of Aldgate.

Stangate House and Garden is a unique property surrounded by picturesque and extensive Camellia gardens. Owned by the National Trust of South Australia, the venue has been beautifully and lovingly maintained. The gardens at Stangate House are maintained by a small but dedicated group of volunteers who meet fortnightly to work in the gardens. The Camellia gardens are maintained by The Camellia Society, Adelaide Hills Inc.

The garden setting makes Stangate House and Garden one of the most picturesque venues in Adelaide. Set in the magnificent Adelaide Hills, only a short drive from Stirling and the Adelaide CBD, Stangate House and Garden is a remarkable space.



Again, Please Note: This is Not an Open Gardens SA hosted event, and all enquiries must be directed to the Adelaide Hills Garden Affair organisers.



Gardening Snippets!

Gardening adds years to your life and life to your years. – **Unknown.**

Gardens are not made by singing ‘Oh, how beautiful,’ and sitting in the shade. – **Rudyard Kipling, ‘The Glory of the Garden’ (1911).**

Garden as though you will live forever. – **William Kent.**

There are no gardening mistakes, only experiments. – **Janet Kilburn Phillips.**

A weed is a plant that has mastered every survival skill except for learning how to grow in rows. – **Doug Larson.**

My garden is my most beautiful masterpiece. – **Claude Monet.**

When the world wearies and society fails to satisfy, there is always the garden. – **Minnie Aumonier.**



Stop building a spaceship to Mars and just plant some damn trees



2024 Inspiring South Australian Women’s Award

Extracts from SA Government Media Release:

<https://www.premier.sa.gov.au/media-releases/news-items/awards-recognise-south-aussie-female-trailblazers>

Announced in February 2024, four exceptional South Australian women have been honoured in this year’s prestigious **Inspiring South Australian Women’s Awards**.



Popular long-time presenter on ABC’s Gardening Australia television program **Sophie Thomson** received the Inspiring South Australian Women’s Award, while distinguished Professor Marnie Hughes-Warrington AO was commended in the same category.

Sophie is well known to, and a great supporter of the gardening community in South Australia. In addition to her television work, Sophie is a radio talkback presenter, national magazine columnist and volunteer, plus ambassador and patron of many organisations.

She has inspired Kangaroo Island’s bushfire-ravaged gardening community to increase community gardens, and also supports other communities affected by natural disasters such as fires and floods.

Sophie keenly highlights the importance of gardening in people’s mental health and the environment, reflecting: “Gardening provides some of the solutions to life’s challenges. It reduces stress, teaches us resilience, care of our environment and gives us great pleasure and rewards when we see what we can achieve through our endeavours.”

The Inspiring South Australian Women’s Awards recognise outstanding women who have made significant community contributions in areas including education, health, charitable and voluntary services, prevention of violence, disability, science and the environment. Recipients are identified by the South Australian community as being worthy of acknowledgement.

Open Gardens SA offers our heartfelt congratulations to Sophie and the other deserving award recipients!

Sophie Thomson - Inspiring South Australian Women’s Award Winner; **Professor Marnie Hughes-Warrington AO** – Commendation for Inspiring South Australian Women’s Award; **Isabella Courtney** – Inspiring Australian Women’s Award Emerging Leader Recipient; & **Dr Sarah Scholten** Commendation for Inspiring Australian Women’s Award Emerging Leader.

Minister for Women Katrine Hildyard presented the awards at Government House. The Inspiring South Australian Women’s Awards are coordinated by the Australia Day Council of South Australia and funded by the Office for Women.



Mount Lofty Botanic Garden

While Open Gardens SA opens **privately owned** gardens to the public, we love the fabulous public gardens we are so fortunate to have here in South Australia. So, in addition to visiting our private open gardens, we hope you also visit and support these public gardens – they are free to visit, and we are confident you won’t be disappointed!

One of the best **public** gardens to visit during Autumn is undoubtedly the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden. The autumn colours are stunning, and admission to the garden is free – however, car parking does have a modest charge.

Mount Lofty Botanic Garden is open every day of the year, including public holidays.

Opening times	Closing times
8:30am every day	Monday - Friday 4pm Weekends and public holidays October to March: 7pm April, May: 5pm June, July, August: 4pm September: 5pm

There are two entrances to the garden:

Upper entrance and car park: Mount Lofty Summit Road, Crafers.

Lower entrance and car park: Lampert Road, off Piccadilly Road, Crafers. The Main Lake and accessible lakeside trail is most easily accessed from this entrance. On popular days, both car parks can fill up quickly.

Ticketed car parking is available in both car parks using ticket machines. These machines only accept credit and debit card payment and do not accept cash.

There are accessible car parks in both car parks (four in the lower car park and three in the upper car park).

Funds collected from ticketed parking directly support the garden’s world-class botanical collections, and education and conservation programs.

Public toilets are available at five locations in Mount Lofty Botanic Garden.



Refreshments

Local chocolatier Bracegirdle’s will park their refreshment bus at Mount Lofty Botanic Garden on weekends and public holidays from **2 March - 10 June 2024** for the autumn season.

From 9am-4pm on Saturdays, Sundays and public holiday Mondays, Bracegirdle’s will be offering a selection of hot and cold drinks, savoury and sweet snacks including almond croissants, vegan raspberry croissants, brownies, sausage rolls, toasted sandwiches and more.

So, make a day of it; take a picnic rug and relax on the lawns with a tasty morning tea, lunch, or afternoon tea from the Bracegirdle’s menu, specifically designed for Mount Lofty Botanic Garden visitors.

Regulations

Botanic gardens are different from public parks in that they're living museums, filled with valuable living collections. For this reason, some activities - such as allowing dogs to roam the Garden - have the potential to damage or destroy valuable plants.

Botanic Gardens are also internationally regarded as places for visitors to seek peace, beauty and tranquillity, so activities that impede this (such as the use of drones) are also discouraged.

- You must not bring dogs or other pets into the Garden.

- You must not fly drones in or above the Garden.
- You must not ride bikes / bicycles, scooters, skateboards or rollerblades.
- You must not bring alcohol into the Garden.
- You must not use BBQs and portable gas cookers into the Garden.
- You must not smoke in the Garden.
- You must not drive vehicles into the Garden.
- You must not damage or remove plants.
- You must not enter garden beds.
- You must not play ball or throwing games.

Wildlife

The Botanic Gardens of South Australia are home to a huge variety of bird and animal life that are attracted to the Gardens’ flora. Do not feed the wildlife.

For more information about the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden please visit their website:

<https://www.botanicgardens.sa.gov.au/visit/mount-lofty-botanic-garden>

Follow OGSA on Facebook and Instagram





Frosty Flats - 2891 Onkaparinga Valley Road, Birdwood, open 09 & 10 March 2024.

Open Gardens South Australia 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.

Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening.

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/opengardensa/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/opengardensa/?hl=en>

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