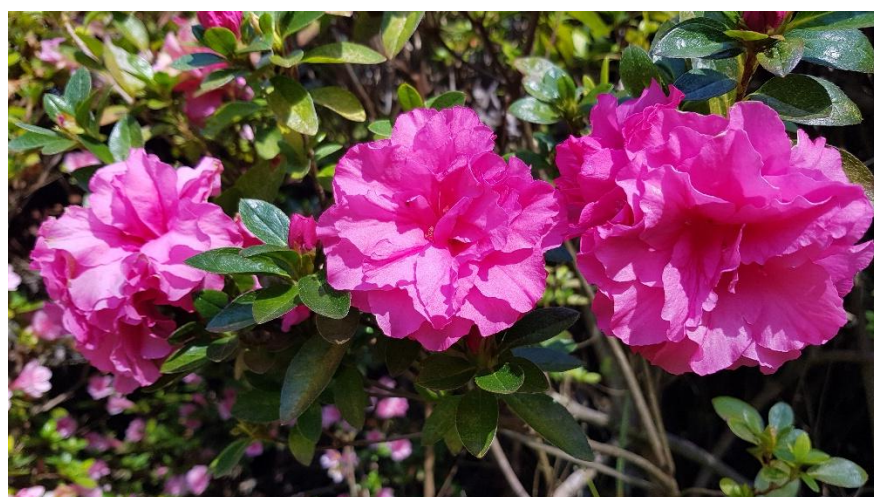


Spring Newsletter 2025



Azalea – a flowering shrub in the rhododendron genus.

It's Spring and we start our spring program with a group of wonderful gardens in Burra open on the weekend of the 13 and 14 September. A day trip to Burra is great, but why not take a couple of days to visit the area – see the open gardens and also visit the amazing tourist attractions – including antique shops, the fascinating history of the area and much more! (More information is available on page 8). As always, we have a wonderful program of open gardens this spring, some new and some regular favourites, for you to visit. We hope you enjoy reading our latest Newsletter. Welcome to spring!

Inside this Issue:

- Open Gardens SA - AGM & Election of Committee
- Garden Owner Information Event
- Ruth Irving – Passing of a Passionate Gardener
- How to Write a Book – advice from Trevor Nottle
- Blue Sky Theatre – Pride and Prejudice
- Spring program of Open Gardens SA
- Burra Gardens – The First Gardens for Our Spring Program 2025
- Plant Profile: Places I have never been.... home to some of my favourite wildflowers – the Narcissi
- Chaenomeles - Flowering Quince
- Harvest Garden Festival returns in February 2026

Early & Mid Spring Open Gardens

September 13 - 14

Six Burra Gardens - Burra

September 20 - 21

The Mosaic Garden -
Kensington Gardens

September 21

Al Ru Farm – One Tree Hill

September 27 – 28

Irina's Garden - Melrose
Park

September 28

The Dominican Peace and
Sophia Gardens -
Cumberland Park

October 04 – 05

Auricht House - Hahndorf

October 11 – 12

Sanders' Garden - Linden
Park

Tickle Tank - Mt Barker

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

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

Open Gardens SA - AGM and Election of Committee Officials

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on Monday 14 July 2025, and commenced at 6pm, at the SA Country Women's Association House, 30 Dequetteville Terrace, Kent Town.

Order of Business

- Minutes from AGM 2024.
- Consideration of the Accounts.
- Report from Joint Chairpersons of the Committee.
- Election of committee members.

Election of Committee Members

The election of Open Gardens SA (OGSA) committee members takes place at the AGM. The Committee comprises a minimum of 10 people and a maximum of 18 people. A committee member must be a current paid up member of OGSA Inc. Retiring committee members are eligible to stand for re-election without nomination.

All existing committee members had indicated their intention to stand for re-election, and as the total number of committee members is less than the maximum of 18, a vote to elect members was not required.

Election of New Committee Officials

At the OGSA Committee Meeting following the AGM, also held on the 14 July 2025, the election of Officials took place. The appointed Committee Officials for the next twelve months are as follows:

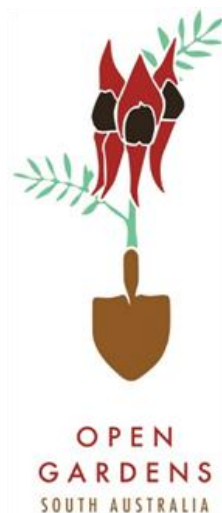
Joint Chairpersons: Vick Winnall, Tom Wilkinson and Jamie McIlwain (4 month rotation).

Deputy Chairpersons: Vick Winnall, Tom Wilkinson and Jamie McIlwain (4 month rotation).

Finance Officer: Rob Andrewartha.

Public Officer: Rob Andrewartha.

Secretary: Alison Edwards. (Meeting Agenda & Minutes:).



Garden Owner Information Event

Each year Open Gardens SA invites our garden owners to our Information Event ahead of the commencement of our spring program. This year the event was held on the afternoon of Sunday 17th August, at the SA Country Women's Association House, 30 Dequetteville Terrace, Kent Town.

This is an important part of the process of preparing to open their garden to the public, and collect the vital Information Kit we provide to every garden owner. It's also an opportunity to learn more about opening their garden, to meet garden owners who have opened before and enjoy a glass of wine, tea or coffee and refreshments.



Open Gardens SA Seasonal Program

The full listing of our spring 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.



Ruth Irving – Passing of a Passionate Gardener

Shared from the Al Ru Farm Facebook page.



It's with heavy hearts that we share the passing of the beautiful and courageous Ruth Irving - lovingly known to many as the "Ru" of Al Ru Farm.

Ruth was not only the soul of Al Ru but a beacon of warmth, wisdom, and strength in our lives. Her presence was magnetic, whether you caught her in the garden for a quick chat, were welcomed into her home for a warm meal, or simply listened to

her share her thoughts on life, nature, or design, Ruth made you feel seen, valued, and inspired.

Ruth poured her heart into everything she did, especially Al Ru, which was not just her home but her canvas, her sanctuary, and the living embodiment of her creativity. She was a whirlwind of passion, always dreaming, planting, building, and nurturing, not just plants, but the people around her too.

As we mourn her loss, we also honour her life by continuing the work she so fiercely loved. In Ruth's own words, "It's not the closing of a chapter, it's the beginning of something extraordinary." We will carry her vision forward with the same heart, hope, and dedication she exemplified every day. Her legacy will continue here at Al Ru, to forever grow and bring joy to more people.

Ruth, thank you for everything. You will be deeply missed but never forgotten.

The Open Garden on September 21st will be a heartfelt celebration of the beautiful gardens she lovingly created and the remarkable life she lived.



How To Write a Book

It's often said that we all have one book in us, so we asked well known and respected horticultural author, Trevor Nottle for some advice!

By Trevor Nottle.

Writing a book of almost any sort, apart from novels that must by their nature be written from the imaginative powers of the author, are not so hard if the author has any degree of passion for their subject. Be they books about wine, or books about collecting Roman coins, or books concerning building rammed earth homes, or even books about plants the way forward is fairly straight-forward.

But first a start must be made.



To make a start a desk (or table) is needed accompanied by a comfortable, supportive chair, the means of writing – quarto plain paper, pens, pencils or biros, or a laptop / personal computer, erasers, white-out, post-it note pads and close by the means of making a cup of tea or coffee. Basically, that's about it,

though a well-lit room with a sunny window and a spot for your dog, or cat to lie are useful additions too.



Nowadays few authors, newbies or those well established in the craft have writing towers such as found at Sissinghurst Castle, or even Anlaby Homestead. But a quiet place of

some kind is essential for thought gathering, construction of the text and reflection on the work as it progresses.

Discipline and routine are needed too, so first acquire a sheet of cardboard about the size of a cushion for a chair and a chisel point Texta in black. Next write in large letters on the piece of cardboard the letters **B** and **U** and **M**. Stand back and consider what has been written – **BUM** which should immediately strike a strong chord in the intending scribe.

Beginning writers are strongly advised to place their bum on the word bum, on the piece of cardboard, sitting firmly, squarely but comfortably and stay where they are. Underscore that instruction stay where you are.

You cannot write if you do not stay where you are.



Then follows a requirement for routine; not only do you have to stay where you are, but you also have to do something in a planned and regular way. In this case your plan is to write something. And the plan of attack is to write down

your ideas in relation to a certain topic or sub-topic and to continue writing until you have said as much as you want to say. This may take just a day or two, or a week or more if you are fact checking as you write. Just how is *Paeonia mlokosewitschii* spelled? Is it the current name? Has the name been changed by botanic research? Will readers understand if I use the common name “Molly the Witch.”?

And there you must sit, day after day, writing. Writing until your routine becomes ingrained and you become habituated.

Now that your writing is underway and established a few other matters need to be given attention: finding a literary agent who will

get a publisher interested in your book and feed that interest with regular updates on progress is the first priority. Next comes raising public awareness about your developing book by seeking publicity on community radio talk-back programmes, articles in local media and talking to local garden clubs and plant societies. At a cost to you your agent can help here but you can do it yourself. To prepare for your awareness raising campaign you will need high-quality, high-resolution portraits of yourself, a list of club and society secretaries; a snappy, short biography of yourself with contact details and a fee structure. It is sometimes embarrassing to put a value on what you do but the costs of public speaking do add up over time and you are not a charitable institution so decide on what you are worth in addition to deciding how much your own costs will be. Remember to include fuel costs, travelling time costs, preparation costs and research costs.

Your contact letter should also say how long your presentation will be, say if you will do Q&A (questions and answers), what equipment you will bring (USB, laptop etc) and what equipment you will need to have supplied by the host club or group (microphone, lapel microphone, laser pointer, screen, projector connecting cables, technical help should things go wrong etc). It would be unwise at this point to suggest you will bring a

make-up artist, hairdresser, voice coach and feng shui consultant. But do say if you will travel to country places or events, and on what terms in regard to travel expenses and accommodation. Would you accept offers of home-based hospitality? Would you be accompanied by a co-driver or partner?

Conclude your letter, if you wish, with the suggestion that payment and other arrangements can always be negotiated.

Always try to keep your advertising material down to one page. If necessary, break your information into two pages: one introducing you and your areas of interest and expertise, contact details and photograph, and the other containing details of business arrangements under which you will work. Club secretaries are busy people too so your letter must be to the point and short.

Set up an engagements calendar on which details can be noted: date, club, topic, contact email and mobile number.

Then back to the writing task.

(There's more yet. It will be covered in the next issue.)



Blue Sky Theatre – Pride and Prejudice - Jane Austen's classic romantic novel. January 2026

Can the Bennet sisters find their perfect match?



believes he is the last man she could ever wed.

But as their lives become intertwined, she finds herself captivated by the man she has sworn to hate forever.

In January 2026, *Blue Sky Theatre* will celebrate ten years of outdoor theatre with a new version of *Pride and Prejudice*.

Mrs Bennet wants all five daughters married to single men in possession of a good fortune. But outspoken Lizzy is determined never to marry. Even when she meets the handsome Mr. Darcy, she

Join us in the garden for a new outdoor version of Jane Austen's greatest tale of latent love with fun and charm to spare!

Starring a cast of Blue Sky theatre favourites, celebrating a decade of outdoor theatre in delightful SA gardens.

Director / Dave Simms

Coming to Victor Harbor, Hahndorf and Springfield from 9-25 January 2026.

TICKETS ON SALE FROM 1 OCTOBER 2025.

<https://www.blueskytheatre.com.au/current-production/>



Flower Pressing Workshop SOLD OUT

A small group of creative participants enjoyed the beauty of nature through the mindful art of flower pressing at a workshop held on the Sunday 31 August 2025.

Participants enjoyed expert tips and techniques for pressing flowers and botanicals, then used them to design their own unique masterpiece, beautifully mounted into a quality picture frame.

The relaxing workshop included a delightful glass of wine and morning tea.

Follow OGSA on Facebook and Instagram



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 2025 Spring 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.

SEPTEMBER 2025

13 - 14 September

Burra Gardens – Six gardens - purchase tickets at the Burra Information Centre, 2 Market Square, Burra. \$25 Entry for all six gardens. No Concessions. Under 18 FREE

20 - 21 September

The Mosaic Garden - 376 Glynburn Road, Kensington Gardens

21 September (Sunday Only)

Al Ru Farm - 1016 One Tree Hill Road, Sampson Flat

27 - 28 September

Irmina's Garden - 69 Penang Avenue, Melrose Park

28 September (Sunday Only)

The Dominican Peace and Sophia Gardens - 225 Cross Road, (Little Street off Eaton Street), Cumberland Park

OCTOBER 2025

04 - 05 October

Auricht House - 7 Pine Avenue, Hahndorf

11 - 12 October

Sanders' Garden - 23 Keyes Street, Linden Park

Tickle Tank - 24 Hill Street, Mt Barker

18 - 19 October

The Garden in Wilpena Street - 41 Wilpena Street, Eden Hills

Bellosguardo Estate - 107 Blocks Road, Birdwood

25 - 26 October

Crabapple Cottage - 1 Jean Street, Leabrook

Bostonvista - 125 Howard Avenue, Boston



Burra Gardens – Six gardens in Burra



The Mosaic Garden - Kensington Gardens



Al Ru Farm - One Tree Hill / Sampson Flat



Irmina's Garden - Melrose Park



Dominican Peace and Sophia Gardens - Cumberland Park



Auricht House - Hahndorf

OGSA 2025 Spring Calendar Continued...

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.

NOVEMBER 2025

02 November (Sunday Only)

The Heritage Garden - 12 McCord Lane, Gillentown (Sevenhill)

07, 08 & 09 November

Etre - 10 Delaney Avenue, Willunga

08 - 09 November

St Githa's - 12 Rosewarne Crescent, Bridgewater

15 - 16 November

St Mary's Vineyard - 563 V & A Lane, Penola

The Garden at Barossa Garden Homestay - 46 Miamba Road, Williamstown

Orcombe Farm - 49 Berryfield Road, Lyndoch

22 - 23 November

Kinclaven - 56 Waverley Ridge Road, Crafers West

29 - 30 November

PunkiPot - 8 East Street, Strathalbyn

DECEMBER 2025

06 - 07 December

Belltunga - 132 Grant Avenue, Toorak Gardens



Crabapple Cottage - Leabrook



Bostonvista - Boston



The Heritage Garden - Gillentown (Sevenhill)



Etre - Willunga



Sanders' Garden - Linden Park



Tickle Tank, Mt Barker



St Githa's - Bridgewater



The Garden in Wilpena Street - Eden Hills



Bellosguardo Estate - Birdwood



St Mary's Vineyard - Penola

View more Open Garden photos on page 10.

Burra Gardens – The First Open Gardens for Our Spring Program 2025

On Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 September 2025, 10am to 4.30pm, we commence our spring program when six gardens in Burra will open together, each with its own unique characteristics. Some are leafy and full of flowers, while others feature climate-compatible, water-efficient plants, and one has a distinctly Mexican feel.

Purchase tickets for entry to all six gardens for just \$25 at the Burra Tourist Office in Market Square, Burra (Ph. 8892 2154).

No concessions. As always, under 18 enjoy free entry.

The gardens are all within walking distance, and a map will be provided with garden addresses and a suggested route to take.



beautiful, well-maintained garden featuring a diverse array of interesting plants.



of vivid blue and yellow paintwork and pots of vibrant annuals in colours that pop against the crisp white gravel of the paths that lead through the garden.



the garden is a show-stopping display of purple.



Boehm's Retreat. In the narrow garden beds on each side of the front door, the flowers of 'Honey Dijon' standard roses and mounds of pretty seaside daisy complement the mellow stonework of the building. Boehm's Retreat is a

Morse Cottage. Behind the historic Morse Cottage, is an impressive plantsman's garden filled with a wide range of native and exotic plants. The Mexican-themed entrance to the garden is colourful and bright with touches

Somerset. Somerset is a large rambling country garden, beautiful in spring when the many deciduous trees are in blossom, hundreds of bulbs are flowering, pockets of annuals add bright colour, and a wisteria covering the front wall of

White Cedars. White Cedars is a compact cottage garden named for the white cedar trees that line Queen Street. Those along the garden boundary feature a pretty mix of succulents and pelargoniums planted at their base.

Ali's Garden - Ilased



In the front garden of Ilased, a row of olive trees clipped into lollipop standards catches the eye, but most of the garden has been established on the slope behind the house.

Sections of stone walling have been used to create level areas for a lawn and several pleasant sitting spots.

Pip's Garden



The white picket fence that borders Pip's Garden perfectly complements the cottage. In spring, the blossoms of Crabapple and Prunus trees, the blue flowers of California lilac, purple rosemary, and lavender, bulbs, daisies, and annuals create a bright and beautiful combination of colours.



Devonshire teas and light meals will be available at the beautifully restored Burra Railway Station.

Full details are available on our website:

<https://opengardensa.org.au/current-season>

Places I have never been..... home to some of my favourite wildflowers – the Narcissi.

By Trevor Nottle.

I have travelled more than most people I think; not that I've won prizes for ticking off a lengthy bucket list but perhaps for business flights, not that I'm a businessman but I have made multiple flights to some uncommon places such as Ushuaia, Carasco, Punta Arenas and Mercedes to give lectures and talks, to see gardens and landscapes, and to help garden owners who want changes and improvements.



Land travel has involved the TGV system, the Maglev and the Taieri Gorge railway but I've never been in a gondola, a dhow or a coracle, and I've never been to the Picos de Europa, the High Pyrenees, the

High Atlas or the Dolomites. And never having been to even one of the last four destinations is a matter of regret for me as they are home to some of my favourite wildflowers – the **Narcissi**, of the high mountain pastures where transhumance is still the local practice of farmers and shepherds. They, and their herds of sheep live the summer months in the high pastures which produce rich milk and excellent cheese, such as Manchego. As Winter nears the shepherds lead their flocks down to the lowlands where they can graze or be shedded when the weather turns bad. The cheeses are carried down too and sold at local markets and to affineurs who sell them on to shopkeepers and shoppers.



In contrast to all this movement the narcissi stay just where they are, growing and flowering in the snow melt, ripening their leaves and bulbs as the high pastures dry off and the seed is shed. The narcissi from the high pasture regions fall

(mostly) into three categories –

1/ the Hoop-Petticoat kinds with white and cream forms flowering first with the lemon and yellow forms coming later although as there is a good deal of natural hybridising intermediate forms are fairly common.

2/ the true Jonquils that always have rich green leaves and stems which are round and smooth in cross section. In some varieties the leaves are held upright while in others they are twisted and lie close to the ground, almost flat. Jonquil flowers are almost always golden yellow, occasionally several shades lighter and all are richly scented. Most often stems carry just two flowers but in good conditions with ample water, three or four flowers are common enough to cause extra delight.



3/ the trumpet kinds commonly referred to as daffodils. While modern daffodil hybrids are large and vary in colour combinations wild daffodils are fairly small and bicolored, having twisted pale petals and deeper yellow trumpets often with flared ends that feature crimped or lobed finishing features.

Examples of all three kinds are still treasured and grown by gardeners and passed along as family heirlooms or shared among admirers. Of the Hoop-petticoats the one most frequently found is a strong growing kind with upright leaves and masses of bright yellow flowers, it is thought to be *Narcissus bulbacodium* 'Praecox' (Photo next page).



David Thomson used to sell it from his shop on Greenhill Road where Burnside Village now stands. There are now many other sorts sold by specialist bulb nurseries in Tasmania, ACT and Victoria.

The true Jonquils are represented by *Narcissus*

campbellii and its double variant both have been grown in gardens since the reign of Queen Anne (of Great Britain) since around 1650. Over time both have been given many names *Narcissus jonquilla* and *Narcissus x odorus*, *Narcissus jonquilla* 'Plenus', *Narcissus* × *odorus* 'Double Campbelle'. There are quite a few modern hybrids too. Those bred in Australia have in the main come from Will Ashburner of JN Hancock & Co. in Olinda, Victoria who used to be regulars at the Royal Adelaide Show; now selling on-line.

While old trumpet daffodils, near species can be sometimes found in old gardens they are quite rare. The most commonly seen is an ancient double yellow in which the doubling occurs in the cup only. The style of it is that of a dozen or more cups neatly stacked one inside another; a quite unusual feature which attracts attention though not always enthusiasm. Sometimes the cup develops a split which rather mars the formality of its appearance. This kind of doubling in the cup only is called 'hose-in-hose'. It's been around in gardens since at least the 1500's and is known as *Narcissus* 'Telamonius Plenus' or *Narcissus* 'Van Sion'. There are numerous double daffodils available today sold in dry packs in supermarkets, nurseries and hardware stores.



Photo - Three species of trumpet Narcissus - Left to Right. N. Pseudonarcissus ssp pseudonarcissus, N. Sp Vickery No. 42. N. primogenitus.



The same daffs top to bottom.

The heart-warming thing about these old narcissi and daffodils is that they are hardy in most of the settled areas of SA; anywhere inside Goyder's Line is a reasonable guide for success. They must have a sunny position and a dry rest in Summer. Feeding with a general fertiliser will foster increase and give

cause for digging up clumps, diving into single bulbs and replanting every 4-5 years. Sustain the dying leaves with one or two soakings with tap water if necessary.



More Open Gardens for Spring 2025!



The Garden at Barossa Garden Homestay - Williamstown



Orcombe Farm – Lyndoch



Kinclaven - Crafers West



PunkiPot – Strathalbyn



Bellunga - Toorak Gardens

Chaenomeles - Flowering Quince

Information sourced from the internet.

Chaenomeles is a genus of four species of deciduous spiny shrubs, usually 1–3 m tall, in the family Rosaceae. They are native to Eastern Asia. These plants are related to the quince (*Cydonia oblonga*) and the Chinese quince (*Pseudocydonia sinensis*), differing in the serrated leaves that lack fuzz, and in the flowers, borne in clusters, having deciduous sepals and styles that are connate at the base.



The leaves are alternately arranged, simple, and have a serrated margin. The flowers are 3–4.5 cm diameter, with five petals, and are usually bright orange-red, but can be white or pink;

flowering is in late winter or early spring. The fruit is a pome with five carpels; it ripens in late autumn.

Common names

Although all quince species have flowers, gardeners in the West often refer to these species as "flowering quince", since *Chaenomeles* are grown ornamentally for their flowers, not for their fruits. These plants have also been called "Japanese quince", and the name "japonica" (referring to *C. japonica*) was widely used for these plants in the 19th and 20th centuries, although this common name is not particularly distinctive, since *japonica* is a specific epithet shared by many other plants. The names "japonica" or "Japanese quince" were (and still are) often loosely applied to *Chaenomeles* in general, regardless of their species. The most commonly cultivated *Chaenomeles* referred to as "japonica" are actually the hybrid *C. × superba* and *C. speciosa*; *C. japonica* itself is not as commonly grown.

Uses

The species have become popular ornamental shrubs in parts of Europe and North America, grown in gardens both for their bright flowers and as a spiny barrier. Some cultivars grow up to 2 m tall, but others are much smaller and creeping. The fruits are hard and – although less astringent than quinces – are unpleasant to eat raw, tasting like an unripe apple with the acidity of a lemon, though they do soften and become less astringent after frost. The fruits are suitable for making liqueurs, as well as marmalade and preserves, as they contain more pectin than apples and true quinces.



The Harvest Garden Festival returns 14 and 15 February 2026



Explore productive gardens and discover how to enjoy harvesting home-grown food in any garden, big or small.

A vegetable patch not only supplies you with nutritious goodness, it also enriches your day-to-day life by inspiring you to get outside and connect with nature.

For this memorable weekend, gardens in Adelaide and the surrounding hills will open their gates, giving you a rare chance to talk with the owners about what they grow and how they grow it.

Brought to you by Open Gardens SA with proceeds to *Food on the Table*.

\$25 for four gardens or \$50 for an all-garden pass – tickets available soon!





Al Ru Farm – Open Sunday 21st September 2025.

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.

Our mailing address is:

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PO Box 605, STIRLING SA 5152

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

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

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

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