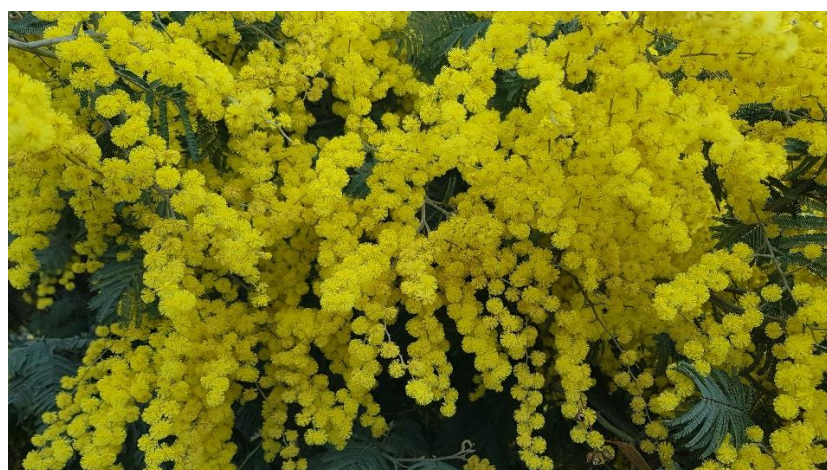




Spring Newsletter 2026



National Wattle Day – 1st September.

Welcome to the Spring 2026 edition of our Quarterly Newsletter. It has been a rather wet winter with good rainfalls in most areas of the State. Most welcome by farmers, and good for our gardens – even if it's been a bit soggy underfoot! Good rains replenish our gardens and the sub-soil, which is so very important in our challenging climate heading into Summer.

Our spring program of open gardens commences on the weekend of the 12 and 13 September – the gardens are listed on our website, so be sure to check it out. Enjoy this Newsletter and we hope to see you in an open garden soon!

Inside this Issue:

- AGM and Election of Committee Officials
- Garden Owner Information Event
- Sold Out Flower Pressing Workshop
- Spring program of Open Gardens SA
- Plant Profile: Galanthus
- Book Review – Miss Willmott's Secret Weapon
- National Wattle Day – 1st September
- Benefits of Native Gardens in South Australia
- Everything You Need to Know About Magpie Swooping Season

Early Spring 2026 Open Gardens

September 12 – 13, 2026

St Ann's – Stirling

*The Garden at Balmae -
Maitland*

September 19 – 20, 2026

Para Para – Gawler West

September 20, (Sunday only)

Marybank Estate - Rostrevor

September 26 – 27, 2026

Wattle Be Will Bee Bush

Garden – Springton

Y Creigiau – Eden Valley

October 04 – 05, 2026

(Sunday & Monday)

*Kangaroo Island Rare Plant
Garden – Menzies, KI*

October 17 – 18, 2026

The Glades - Aldgate

October 18 (Sunday only)

Al Ru Farm – One Tree Hill

October 24 - 25, 2026

Claire's Garden – Willunga

*Christine's Cottage Garden -
Willunga*

**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 13 July 2026, and commenced at 6pm, at the SA Country Women's Association House, 30 Dequetteville Terrace, Kent Town.

Order of Business

- Minutes from AGM 2025.
- 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 13 July 2026, the election of Officials took place. The appointed Committee Officials for the next twelve months are as follows:

Chairperson: Jamie McIlwain.

Finance Officer: Rob Andrewartha.

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



This year's event was well attended despite the rather gloomy weather!



*Follow OGSA on Facebook
and Instagram*



Sold Out - Flower Pressing Workshop

Open Gardens SA hosted a very successful Flower Pressing Workshop in late July - an inspiring afternoon of flowers, art and slow making at FABRIK in Lobethal, in the Adelaide Hills.



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 09 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.

Hosted in a dedicated creative space alongside fellow artists, this intimate botanical workshop allowed participants to slow down, connect and create in a beautiful setting.

The workshop focused on discovering the fine art of flower pressing and creating a beautiful floral art piece using carefully preserved seasonal blooms, petals and botanicals. Guided through composition, colour, texture and layering techniques, participants transformed delicate blooms into a framed artwork to take home.



Designed for all experience levels, the workshop offered a relaxed and welcoming space to gather, create and be inspired.

The cost of the small, hands-on workshop included a delicious morning tea as well as the expert tuition.

These small, specialised events are very popular and sell out quickly. Open Gardens SA plan to host more of this type of event in the future and looks forward to sharing the details as they become available later in the year.



About Open Gardens SA – Who we are and What we do!

Open Gardens SA is a not-for-profit organisation overseen by a dedicated committee of garden lovers, designers and owners who enjoy sharing the treasures of SA's varied private gardens and bringing garden lovers together.

Garden owners generously volunteer to open the gates to their gardens for a weekend, giving the community the rare opportunity to enjoy the garden's beauty, appreciate the owner's hard work and learn from their experience.

From Spring to Autumn each year, our team assists each owner with planning and promoting their opening. We provide the insurance, banking process instructions, and marketing needed to ensure every garden opens safely and successfully.

Some of the proceeds from our garden openings are donated to charities of the garden owners' choice. Thanks to the generosity of garden owners, volunteers and visitors, we have donated more than \$1.6 million to charities since 2015.

Open Gardens SA actively promotes the benefits of gardens and gardening and donates money raised at the garden gate to many horticultural and community projects.

Each alternate year, we stage weekend-long festivals with a dozen gardens open at once. The SA Landscape Festival, in conjunction with the Master Landscapers Association, opens the gates to some of our state's most beautiful, professionally designed and built, privately owned gardens. The OGSA Harvest Festival is a weekend to explore productive gardens and discover the secrets to planting and harvesting your own home-grown and healthy food.

We invite people to become a member of Open Gardens SA, by taking out an annual single membership or a discounted 3-year membership. Membership offers you a chance to associate with other garden lovers, receive a discounted entry fee for each open garden, discount offers, invitations, and emails announcing the coming weekend's openings, and show your support for our work.

More details are available on our website:

<https://opengardensa.org.au/membership>



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 2026 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 2026

12 – 13 September

St Anns – 14 Orley Road, Stirling.

The Garden at Balmae - 799 North South Road, Maitland.

19 – 20 September

Para Para – 17-19 Penrith Avenue, Gawler West.

20 September (Sunday only)

Marybank Estate – 404 Montacute Road, Rostrevor

26 - 27 September

Wattle Be Will Bee Bush Garden – 27 William Street, Springton.

Y Creigiau – 20 Keyneton Road, Eden Valley.

OCTOBER 2026

04 & 05 October (Sunday and Monday)

Kangaroo Island Rare Plant Garden – 90 Ropers Road, Menzies, Kangaroo Island.

17 – 18 October

The Glades – 5 Linwood Avenue, Aldgate.

18 October (Sunday only)

Al Ru Farm - 1016 One Tree Hill Road, One Tree Hill.

24 - 25 October

Claire's Garden – 14 St Peters Terrace, Willunga.

Christine's Cottage Garden – 17 St Peters Terrace, Willunga.

31 October - 01 November

Rosenthal Gully – 2 Rosenthal Road, Bridgewater.

Beneath the Scented Canopy – 18 Margaret Street, Glandore.



St Ann's - Stirling



The Garden at Balmae - Maitland



Para Para – Gawler West



Marybank Estate – Rostrevor



Wattle Be Will Bee Bush Garden - Springton



Y Creigiau – Eden Valley

Continued next page....

OGSA 2026 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 2026

01 November (Sunday only)

The Heritage Garden – 12 McCord Lane, Sevenhill.

07 - 08 November

The Knoll - 6 The Knoll Crescent, Coromandel Valley.

Drouin – 12 Mossop Court, Littlehampton.

14 - 15 November

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

Corryton Park - 335 Wirra Wirra Road, Pewsey Vale.

Nick Mount's Garden - 2 The Parkway Leabrook.

21 - 22 November

Lochness Lodge – 282 Ironbank Road, Ironbank.

Open Gardens SA - Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening.



Beneath the Scented Canopy - Glandore



The Heritage Garden - Sevenhill



The Knoll - Coromandel Valley



Drouin - Littlehampton



St Mary's Vineyard – Penola



Corryton Park - Pewsey Vale



Lochness Lodge - Ironbank



Kangaroo Island Rare Plant Garden – Menzies, KI



The Glades - Aldgate



Al Ru Farm – One Tree Hill



Christine's Cottage Garden - Willunga



Claire's Garden – Willunga



Rosenthal Gully - Bridgewater

Plant Profile: GALANTHUS

Article by Trevor Nottle.

British troops of all ranks returning from the Crimean War brought with them seeds and roots of plants they had found growing around their trenches and battlelines as reminders of where they had spent many hard, long months fighting. Among these floral mementoes were bulbs now known as snowdrops, or *Galanthus* at least some of which settled down and became acclimatised in English gardens. While these bulbs are pretty hardy it seems none survived being carried the longer distances to Australia or New Zealand.

It was not until the 1950's that seeds and bulbs began to be imported by members of rock garden and alpine plant societies. It seems that a month or two at sea was too long for the seeds to remain viable, or the bulbs to be safe from rotting in the heat of an equatorial crossing. But arrive they did and ever since they have become much in demand among gardeners with a nostalgic frame of mind, and those who just like new plants to try.



While there are some varieties available at astronomic prices others are quite reasonably priced for home gardeners to venture a few dollars on a bulb or two. Three that spring to mind are *Galanthus X 'Elwesii'*, *Galanthus woronowii* (photo left

and below) and *Galanthus x 'Lady Beatrix Stanely'*. The latter is one of the double kinds that grows without cossetting while the other two, the former large and the last named small are known to multiply well by offsets and self-sown seeds.

Snowdrops are hardy and do not mind being dry while dormant, however they will be badly damaged or completely rotted if the bulbs are baked. To ensure good health and safety the bulbs should be planted where they will never be roasted or even lightly cooked. A semi-shaded position will suit them best. If left alone and not cultivated by un-necessary digging the bulbs will multiply and self sow well enough. Bulbs scattered among deciduous shrubs in



clusters and drifts will, given time, make a charming scene as Winter gives way to Spring in late August.



Galanthus X 'Elwesii'



Galanthus x 'Lady Beatrix Stanely'



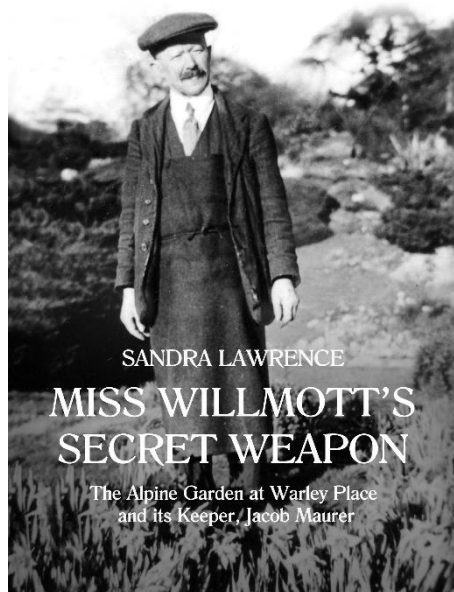
Book Review – Miss Willmott's Secret Weapon

Sandra Lawrence.
Eryngium Press, UK. 2025.

Review By Trevor Nottle.

High up in the box rooms, turrets and attics of Berkeley Castle in Gloucestershire there exist small mountains of mouldering papers and photographs, the archives of long dead members of the ancient noble Berkeley family whose ownership runs back 900 years to pre- Norman times. Down in the cellars

rotting old cases and file boxes hold more 'buried treasure' including that of Miss Ellen Willmott, a noted gardener of the 19thC, who was a member of the family.



Famed, among other things for owning 3 large gardens - Warley Place in the UK, Tresserve in France and Boccanegra in Italy which at one time between them employed over 104 gardeners to keep up appearances. Needless to say Miss Willmott was extremely wealthy and she was accustomed to having her way.

In 'Miss Willmott's Secret Weapon' the author, Sandra Lawrence, tells the story of Jacob Maurer, a Swiss gardener with highly regarded

expertise in the propagation and cultivation of alpine plants such as were needed to populate the then popular alpine gardens and rockeries, of fashionable gardens. That Maurer was employed at the time by the most famous alpine nursery of Henry Correvon. La Floraire, outside Geneva, was of no concern to Miss Willmott. With promises that went as far as a pension of one Pound a week. and charming offers of a free house for his growing family she stole him away.

This is the story of the famous rock garden Maurer made, how it played into Willmott's ambitions for Royal friendship with Queen Alexandra and what followed. A previously untold story it makes a fascinating read about privilege, power, money and what it could buy in the late 19th C - and what it couldn't buy too.

What's left of Warley Place and Ellen Willmott's grand garden can still be visited. It is found at the website of Warley Nature Reserve where hundreds of photographs are posted by visitors. The mansion was demolished in 1939 but there are remains of some of the built features. What is impressive are the millions of Spring bulbs that have survived and multiplied throughout the 25 acres that once comprised the gardens. Crocus, snowdrops, daffodils and more which Willmott purchased by the thousand have proliferated magnificently. Of the prodigious Alpine garden she commissioned for her 21st birthday almost nothing remains. And Jacob Maurer's work of a lifetime has virtually disappeared, his little treasures overwhelmed by weeds and rampant intruders now cleared away by volunteers so a few surviving ferns and Pulmonarias can be seen.



Para Para, Corryton Park and Yallum Park Open Gardens

Para Para, Corryton Park and Yallum Park are three gardens we are opening this Spring and next Autumn. Para Para is opening on the 19 and 20 September, Corryton Park opens on the 14 and 15 November and Yallum Park is planned to open in Autumn 2027. What's special and exciting about each of these three gardens is that they are featured in the new Netflix mini-series *My Brilliant Career*.

The official trailer for the mini-series has been released, and you can see it on You Tube here: [My Brilliant Career | Official Trailer | Netflix](#)



Para Para - 17-19 Penrith Avenue, Gawler West.



Corryton Park - 335 Wirra Wirra Road, Pewsey Vale.



Yallum Park – Penola.

National Wattle Day – 1st September

Information sourced for the National Wattle Day website:

<https://wattleday.asn.au/>

National Wattle Day is a formally proclaimed national day on 1 September. Today it is a unifying day to celebrate Australia and being Australian.

We celebrate National Wattle Day because:

- National Wattle Day includes everyone;
- Golden Wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) is our national floral emblem. It is a symbol that comes directly from our land;
- Golden Wattle is a unifying symbol of Australia and Australians. There is no other symbol that says so much about us and our land, Australia;
- Wattles are Australian with great diversity (more than 1,075 described *Acacia* species) and resilience like our people;
- Wattle welcomes the spring, and is among the first plants to regenerate after fire, reminding us of the importance of renewal as it paints our national colours across our landscapes; and
- All wattles remind us of Australia and Australians.

So, join the national celebration of National Wattle Day – 1 September every year.



Photo: Acacia pycnantha (Golden Wattle) – Australia's national floral emblem since 1988.

National Wattle Day – history.

In 1992, the first day of September each year was officially proclaimed 'National Wattle Day' throughout Australia by the Governor-General of Australia.

Before then Wattle Days on different days in different states and territories had been celebrated since 1 September 1910. This

was when the first Wattle Day celebration across state borders took place in NSW, Victoria and South Australia.

Wattle days have been celebrated for different reasons over the last century. For example, they were linked during WW1 to patriotism, a reminder of home for those fighting wars overseas and fundraising for related community causes.

Perhaps Dr Rod Panter summed it up best when he wrote in 1997 that:

“Wattle and Wattle Day can symbolise virtually anything we want, but they relate generally to Spring, being Australian, the Australian environment, and history. Spring has many positive values such as optimism, bounty and abundance, reliability, colour, and so on.

We can celebrate our ‘Australianness’ on Wattle Day in quite a different way from Anzac Day, which in recalling past wars focuses on Australian qualities of courage and mateship.

Wattle day, by contrast, looks forward (to Spring) and can celebrate the nation’s undoubted qualities of good humour, fairness, generosity, informality and democracy.”

About Wattles.

More than 1,076 species of *Acacia* have evolved over the last 35 million years in Australia, and they are all commonly referred to as wattles. There are more species of wattle in Australia than any other woody plants, including the well-known eucalypts. In Australia today, wattles are more commonly used for garden, amenity and rehabilitation plantings than anything else, but they are also part of Australian culture and have healed and sustained indigenous and colonial Australians in many fascinating ways.

For more information visit the National Wattle Day website:

<https://wattleday.asn.au/>



Benefits of Native Gardens in South Australia

Photos Di Michalk. Article shared from:

<https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/goodliving/posts/2020/09/spring-flowering-natives>

Five Top Reasons to Plant South Australian Natives in Your Garden.

Native gardens are beautiful – and they have many benefits. Here's why you should plant natives at your place.



South Australian natives are the plants that thrived here before European colonists came ashore and endeavoured to recreate their landscapes from home by introducing exotic plant species.

Just like humans adapt to their environments, so do plants. Native plant species naturally occur without human intervention, evolving to

the local conditions and climate, and alongside wildlife over many years.

It's these qualities that make them a winning choice for your garden. Feeling inspired? Here are our 5 top reasons for you to plant natives in your garden:

1. They can survive on rainfall alone

If you are a serial plant killer, selecting natives may be your turning point. Many native species are easy to grow, resilient and do a great job at supporting themselves in our challenging climate.

In the first year after planting them, you might need to give them an occasional water if rainfall is scarce, but after that you'll have a hardy plant that can survive on rainfall alone.

2. They provide habitat, shelter and food for local wildlife

Native plants and native animals have evolved together over thousands of years, supporting one another to survive.

Lots of SA's native animals live on the urban fringe, so if you plant a native garden, you're also inviting native animals in by extending their habitat.

In an established native garden you could expect to see a variety of [native bees](#), [birds](#), [insects](#), bats, [small mammals](#), reptiles and maybe even [frogs](#).

To entice them to your garden, start by choosing a variety of native plants that provide different food sources, such as flowers for

nectar-feeding birds and fruit for possums. With the right plant species, you can provide wildlife with a fruitful oasis all year round.

You can also consider native plants that provide animals with shelter and protection from predators. Your garden could act as a mini wildlife sanctuary where native species come to seek refuge.



3. They support a healthy environment

Vast amounts of fertilisers and pesticides are often applied to support exotic plants, especially lawns.

But the excess phosphorus and nitrogen, the main ingredients in fertilisers, will run off into waterways and can cause excess algae growth. These algae reduce the oxygen content in our waters and are harmful to aquatic life.

Chemical pesticides cause similar issues as they contaminate soil and waterways and can cause unintended harm to other plants and wildlife.

Luckily, fertilisers and pesticides are generally not needed for native plants. If you are ever unsure about which products are safe for your garden, it is best to seek

expert advice to ensure your soil stays healthy and balanced.

4. They improve biodiversity

Protecting areas of remnant native vegetation is essential in preserving biodiversity.

Good biodiversity creates healthy ecosystems that clean the water, purify the air, maintain healthy soil, regulate the climate and provide us with food and resources.



Unfortunately, when land is developed, native vegetation is often removed and replaced with exotic species. When this happens, species diversity is greatly reduced.

Establishing your own native garden can help combat this and assist in preserving biodiversity. Go one better by planting **local** native species in your garden – that is, choosing plants that are native to your local area. Check out the Botanic Gardens of South Australia's [Plant Selector](#) tool to find out what your local natives are.

5. They help you save time and money

Native plants not only benefit native wildlife and the environment, but you as well!

As native plants are low maintenance, it means you can spend less time in the garden while still reaping the rewards of a beautiful green space.

And because not all of them require fertilisers or pesticides and can support themselves on very little water, there are less costs to outlay – which means more pennies in your pocket!



Everything you need to know about magpie swooping season

Article shared from: <https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/goodliving>

It's magpie swooping season in South Australia. But why do magpies swoop and how can you avoid a nasty run-in?



For most of the year, outside of the breeding season, magpies live harmoniously with humans and other animals, and are a cherished addition to our gardens, reserves and national parks. However,

during the nesting season from August to October, some magpies can become highly protective of their young.

Why do they swoop?

Just like us, they use body language - beak clapping, swooping and screeching – to warn other birds, animals and humans to keep away from their eggs or newly-hatched chicks.

Females will typically lay between 3 and 5 eggs and will sit on them for 3 weeks until they hatch. It is the expectant father magpie that will defend the nest from the time the eggs are laid until the young birds are fledged.

Approximately 90% of male magpies won't swoop and females typically don't swoop at all.

While some male magpies will defend their nests against anything they consider to be a threat - from a sparrow to a dog to a human - the good news is that this should only happen for about 6 weeks.

Interesting fact: Magpies can remember many different individual human faces! They also have very long memories. So, if you've been swooped before, or even if you just look like someone they swooped last year, you're likely to get the same treatment again.

So, if you have a feisty feathered friend in your neighbourhood, here are some handy tips.

How to avoid getting swooped

1 – Give magpies a wide berth

Magpies often live and nest in the same area their entire lives and tend to defend the territory within 50 to 100

metres of their nest. If you're out and about on your bike, walking your dog or going for a jog, the best way to avoid being swooped is to change your route for the breeding season which lasts 6 to 8 weeks.

2 – Don't run ... or stop

If you are swooped on, don't run or fight back. If you're on a bike, get off it. Stay calm and walk quickly through the area.

3 – Protect your head

Magpies usually swoop from behind and will just clear your head. Some will strike the top of your head with their wings, beak or claws so try to protect your head and eyes by wearing a wide brimmed hat and glasses or walk with an open umbrella above your head.



4 – Walk with friends

Walk or ride in groups, as swooping birds usually only target individuals. You can also place a sign nearby to warn others or let your local council know so they can install a sign for the period.

5 – Keep your cool

Do not act aggressively. If you wave your arms about or shout, the magpies will see you

as a threat to the nest. Remember, they have the ability to remember and recognise you next time, so you don't want to get in their bad books!

The magpie family

The Australian Magpie can live for 25 to 30 years and has a distinctive, cheerful warbling cry. Magpies are extremely curious and often friendly garden visitors. Dad has a white back, while mum and chick have grey backs. Generally, magpies mate for life and only search for a new partner when one dies. They spend a lot of time foraging for insects and worms on the ground and walk one foot at a time rather than hopping.

The gardener's friend

Magpies are beneficial to agriculture, conservation areas and gardens because they feed on pest insects. They are particularly effective at keeping snails away from your favourite roses and veggies. During winter and spring, magpies sing a short melodious version of carolling just before dawn and at sundown – one of the most delightful sounds in South Australian gardens and bushland.

Other swooping birds

It's not just Australian magpies that swoop, although they cause the most concern. Magpie-larks, Plovers (Masked Lapwings), Grey Butcher Birds, Red Wattlebirds, and Laughing Kookaburras are also known to swoop during nesting season.



Plovers (Masked Lapwings)



Kookaburra



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.



Spring Flowering Daffodils.



Nick Mount's Garden – Leabrook – open 14 & 15 November 2026.

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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