## OPEN GARDENS SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

# Summer Newsletter 2025





Beautiful bunches of summer flowers.

Welcome to our Summer / Christmas edition of our Newsletter. The saying is "time flies when you're having fun" and visiting our open gardens is always fun – a great day out enjoying beautiful, inspiring and educational gardens. Open Gardens SA takes a short break from opening gardens in December and returns in January 2025, and this allows us time to prepare for the New Year and bring you more beautiful gardens. Please support our summer gardens as the owners are very generous in sharing their gardens during our hottest season. And finally, the management committee of Open Gardens SA wishes you and your loved ones a peaceful safe and happy Christmas holiday season and New Year.

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## Summer Open Gardens

December 2024

Open Gardens SA takes a short break from opening gardens in December and returns in January 2025

January 18 – 19, 2025 Littlewood Farm (The Agapanthus Farm) – Littlehampton

January 10 – 26 Theatre in the Garden, Jack and The Absolutes, three locations – Victor Harbor, Hahndorf, and Blackwood.

February 01 – 02 Goodhouse 57 – Mt Barker

February 08 – 09 Tipsy Hill - Blewitt Springs

**February 15 – 16** Joe's Connected Garden – Elizabeth Grove

See details of the full program on our website: http://opengardensa.org.au/



# Open Gardens SA - Garden Owner Thankyou Function and End of Year Drinks



Our Annual Garden Owner Thankyou Function and End of Year Drinks was held on the afternoon of Sunday 08 December 2024, generously hosted at the home and beautiful garden of committee member Fiona Watson and her husband Tony. The Open Gardens SA Committee invited garden owners to our Christmas

get-together to thank them for their support and hard work in 2024.

Garden Owners were also presented with our official commemorative plaque to display in their garden to recognise their hard work and generosity in opening their garden as part of our program.

This annual event is a lovely way to celebrate the end of the year and our 10th successful season of open gardens. The guests enjoyed the good company of other garden



owners, delicious food, and a selection of wine, which was generously supplied by Howard Vineyard of Nairne.

This event also provides the opportunity for our Chariperson, Vick Winnall, to personally thank the garden owners for opening their gardens and becoming a part of the Open Gardens SA gardening "family".



*Vick Winnall, OGSA, addressing the gathering.* 



*Irene from TickleTank with her commemorative plaque.* 





# The Playford Trust / TAFE SA Awards 2024

*For more information visit:* https://playfordtrust.com.au/

## History

The Playford Memorial Trust was established in 1983, with bipartisan support from the South Australian Parliament, to honour the memory of Sir Thomas Playford, the State's longest serving Premier.

Its original objective, as expressed in the trust deed, was to establish 'a fund to promote, encourage and finance research and development of projects relating to the primary, secondary and tertiary and mining industries which will be of practical use and benefit to South Australians'.

While the initial focus was on supporting PhD students studying horticulture and aquaculture – two areas of particular interest to Sir Thomas – it has since been expanded to include advanced manufacturing and new technologies; agriculture, aquaculture and food production; water, energy and climate change; space and defence technologies; health sciences and enabling technologies; and mining and resource development.

The Board actively review the Trust's strategic priorities to ensure South Australia's future needs are met.

2024 Awards Night – 20<sup>th</sup> November.



Recipients of the 2024 Playford Trust/TAFESA Awards photographed at the annual awards night, held at TAFE's Adelaide Campus on November 20, 2024.

It was a special ceremony in more ways than one. Fifteen talented, hard-working TAFE students received Playford Trust study awards – and the Trust and TAFESA celebrated 25 years of working together to support skills development in South Australia.

The stars of the night were undoubtedly the recipients of the 2024 awards – from six campuses and across three industry categories: Modern Industries and New Technology; Agriculture, Aquaculture and Food Production; and Environment, Conservation and Horticulture.

Dr Norman Baker, TAFESA's Executive Director, Education Operations praised the Trust, its current and past partners, its volunteer board members and all the committed TAFESA staff who have helped to support the awards program over the years.

"The program highlights our students' talents and achievements to a wider audience – including potential employers – and enables students to develop important networks," he said.

"The awards present a fantastic opportunity for students to ease the financial burden as they continue their studies and take the next step in their careers."

**Open Gardens SA** provides funding for Awards in the *Environment, Conservation and Horticulture* category. This year we funded two Awards, and the very worthy recipients are **Brihanna Crompton** studying a Diploma of Conservation and Ecosystem Management at the Barossa Campus, and, **Emily Stone** studying a Diploma of Landscape Design at the Urrbrae Campus.

**Brihanna Crompton** indicated her qualifications are going to help build her business. She aims to promote, inform, encourage and implement ecological gardens with an emphasis on permaculture.

The information and the study that this diploma provides is assisting in creating the most functional and beneficial gardens for all spaces. But with a focus on small spaces and suburban gardens and this is because she is most passionate about rewilding suburbia, turning the concrete playground - into a bushland oasis. The ultimate urban habitat.



Brihanna Crompton with Vick Winnall representing OGSA.

**Emily Stone** advised she hopes that her studies will put her in excellent stead for a future career combining both Garden Design and Maintenance. It is her dream to both create and maintain beautiful gardens in the Southern Suburbs of Adelaide, and to offer a consultation service that helps people solve their horticultural or garden design 'problems'.

"I want to inspire a passion in others for horticulture through my designs and the gardens I maintain and curate. I believe that everybody deserves a space in nature that they can connect

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with in a meaningful way. I would love to create a business that has longevity and the potential to employ other people".



Emily Stone with Vick Winnall representing OGSA.

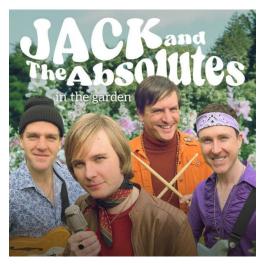
The Playford Trust offered their very special thanks to the wonderful partners who help the Trust fund these awards – **Open Gardens SA**, Sandy's Memorial Trust and Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide.



# Blue Sky Theatre – Jack and The Absolutes. A groovy reimagining of Sheridan's classic comedy The Rivals set in 1969.

Have you booked your tickets yet? Don't delay as these tickets sell quickly!

This January 2025, and *Blue Sky Theatre* and *Open Gardens SA* will present outdoor performances of *Jack and The Absolutes* in three SA gardens.



Jack Absolute is the lead singer of a successful pop group, and he's in love with Lydia Languish, the wealthy Carnaby Street fashion designer. But Lydia has just returned from Woodstock, where she's seen the light and wants to forgo fame and fortune and live a bohemian lifestyle with Johnny Beverly, the group's chilled-out sound guy.

But Lydia's aunt, Mrs Malaprop, can never allow such a lowly love connection. And Jack's mother, Lady Antonia Absolute, is determined that her son marries well, whether he likes it or not.

Jack plans to disguise himself as his rival to win Lydia's love. But he has more challengers than he realises — the rest of the band are planning to woo Lydia, too!

Director Dave Simms says Richard Brinsley Sheridan's original comedy was written in 1775 and introduced the infamous Mrs Malaprop.

"She's one of theatre's greatest characters renowned for using the wrong words when trying to impress," explained Dave. "You could say she's a parsonage of great lexicographical dexterity and faultless electrocution!"

There will be nine shows in three venues during January, and the money raised will support various charities, including the Hans Heysen Foundation and Adelaide Botanic Gardens Foundation.

Join us in the garden for this confusion of unlikely lovers and mangled English adjectives.

Starring / Laura Antoniazzi / Robert Bell / Joshua Coldwell / Lee Cook / Emily Currie / Gabe Mangelsdorf / Lucy Johnson / Lindsay Prodea / Nicole Rutty / Georgia Stockham / Leighton Vogt / Director / Dave Simms. For more information and to book tickets: Jack and The Absolutes | Blue Sky Theatre Productions

January 10, 11 & 12 VICTOR HARBOR

January 17, 18 & 19 HAHNDORF

January 24, 25 & 26 BLACKWOOD

#### Tickets \$40.

Gates open at 4.30pm. Show starts at 6.30pm.

The bar is open, you can look around the garden prior to the show.

Blue Sky Theatre provide a seat in the auditorium for you to watch the performance.

30 minute interval at 7.45pm. The bar is open at the interval. Show ends just after 9.15pm. It will be dark at the end so bring a torch if you wish. And remember it can get cool after the sun sets. *Presented by Blue Sky Theatre Productions and Open Gardens SA*.



# SA Landscape Festival Returns in 2025

The Much Anticipated & Popular SA Landscape Festival Returns for Another Brilliant Weekend in April 2025. Would-be green thumbs have a rare chance to peek behind the fences of professionally designed private gardens on the weekend of Saturday 05 and Sunday 06 April 2025.



**Open Gardens SA** and **Master Landscapers of SA** are delighted to bring you our *third* **SA Landscape Festival** dedicated to our state's landscaped gardens, each created for their owners by design professionals. Tickets sales are about to be launched and will be available at the SA Landscape Festival website: https://salandscapefestival.com.au/ This

Festival will have a focus on small gardens to highlight what can be accomplished in limited spaces.

Selected SA gardens will open their gates offering a rare chance for visitors to learn from garden design gurus and pick up tips on creating their own perfect back yards. From contemporary courtyards to attractive, easy-to-maintain family friendly backyards, there are ideas for every smaller sized garden. The proud owners have generously agreed to allow visitors to view their stunning gardens – in locations from the coast to the Adelaide foothills.

SA Country Women's Association (SACWA) will again be volunteering at the gates to raise funds, and each garden designer and / or their representatives will be on-hand to explain their design ideas, offer guidance and information.



The gardens will be open 10:00am to 4:00pm daily over the weekend of the 05 and 06 April 2025, for garden-lovers to collect ideas and admire the work of some of our state's best garden designers.

**Tickets are \$10 per garden or \$50 for an all-garden weekend pass.** Children under 12 FREE entry. No Concessions. All proceeds from the SA Landscape Festival will support the SACWA.



To plan your weekend, from January 2025 you can preview the gardens and book tickets at the SA Landscape Festival website: https://salandscapefestival.co m.au/

During April 2023 and across 10 locations in Adelaide, the second SA Landscape



Festival was very successful with an estimated 6,500 visitations with most people visiting multiple gardens. Visitors were able to ask questions and receive valuable advice from the garden designer and / or their representatives explaining their design ideas, offering guidance and information. Not only did the South Australian public support this event, we also had a number of interstate visitors who thoroughly enjoyed the festival experience. The success of the 2023 Festival helped donate over \$28,000 to the South Australian Country Women's Association.



# OGSA Recommends....

We recommend you always check our website to confirm garden opening details prior to visiting. The website is an upto-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 Summer 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.

*Open Gardens SA takes a short break from opening gardens in December and returns in January 2025.* 

## JANUARY 2025

**18 - 19 January** *Littlewood Farm (The Agapanthus Farm) -* 69 Easlea Road, Littlehampton

## **10 – 26 January**

*Theatre in the Garden – Jack and The Absolutes,* three locations – Victor Harbor, Hahndorf, and Blackwood:

10, 11 & 12 January in Lower Inman Valley, Victor Harbor
17, 18 & 19 January at The Cedars, Hahndorf
24, 25 & 26 January at Wittunga Botanic Garden, Blackwood
Gates open at 4.30pm. The shows start at 6.30pm. Tickets \$40.
Jack and The Absolutes | Blue Sky Theatre Productions

## FEBRUARY 2025

**01 – 02 February** *Goodhouse 57* - 14 Acacia Street, Mount Barker

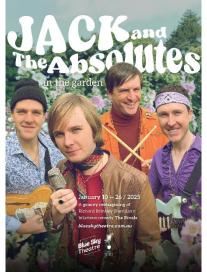
**08 - 09 February** *Tipsy Hill -* 309 Blewitt Springs Road, Blewitt Springs

**15 – 16 February** *Joe's Connected Garden* - 6 Argent Street, Elizabeth Grove

Garden openings will be cancelled in fire-rating districts on days that are declared "Catastrophic".



Littlewood Farm - Littlehampton



*Theatre in the Garden – Jack and The Absolutes,* three locations – Victor Harbor, Hahndorf, and Blackwood



Goodhouse 57 - Mount Barker



Tipsy Hill - Blewitt Springs



Joe's Connected Garden -Elizabeth Grove

# Plant Profile: The Poor Knights Island Lily (Xeronema callistemon)

#### By Trevor Nottle. Photos by Trevor Nottle, and sourced on the internet.

Here is a plant to test the patience of any gardener. The Poor Knights Island lily (Xeronema callistemon) inhabits a very unique home in the Pacific Ocean approximately 40K off shore from Whangarei on the North Island of New Zealand. Poor Knights Island is the remains of a volcano that sticks up from the ocean floor and has been eroded by wave action over eons. It is what is left of the core of the volcano; a hard, rocky place with little to sustain anything but colonies of sea-birds.



Somehow the lily has survived for hundreds, probably thousands of years – or longer. Basically, it lives on guano and rain. The soil, such as it is, is held in pockets in the rock and holds pieces of scoria, some wind-blown sand enriched with the

compost of decayed leaves and possibly some shed feathers. Promising stuff indeed.

Forty five years ago I was given a small seedling with three tiny leaves by a gardening friend. He had received a handful of seed from a penfriend who was a member of an alpine gardening club in New Zealand and germinated a few. He gave away a few and kept a few for himself.

I read up on my gift plant and gleaned it was hardy, quite well known to gardeners in New Zealand and easily managed in a pot. A simple potting mix was prescribed for success: gravel or scoria pebbles, free draining sand and a scattering of leaf mould. Simplifying it further I used scoria and trickled a little comport on top. Watering after the seedling had been potted drove the compost down between the pebbles and that was it. I stood the pot out in the full sun and rain and left it to survive as best it could. Now and again, during summer it got a squirt from my hose as I watered the garden.

And grow it did, very slowly and steadily for many years until I began to wonder if it would ever flower. At this stage I contacted a nurseryman in New Zealand who told me I should fertilise it, which is what I did, using slow release granules.

I waited a few more years with hope springing eternal every spring watching for signs of new growth and flower spikes until after 3 more years I (gently) felt a big leaf fan and detected the telltale swelling. The flower bud emerged from a sheath of leaves and it seemed fair set to do its thing. It didn't. The spike developed but aborted before any flowers opened.

By this time the plant has completely outgrown the pot I had put it in, leaf fans began to hang over and down from the rim of the pot. It was so heavy my wife and I could hardly move it, so when the whole lot was tumbled over in a high wind, we could not restore it to its position in an upright state. To do that I had to cut off about two thirds of the leaves, during which process I managed to sever two developing flower stems! Silly me. Proceeding more carefully I felt each fan before I cut it and by that means managed to discover three more stems without damaging them.



The pot was carefully returned to an almost upright state and held in position with three strong stakes to make certain it would not be blown over again. With hopes raised I fed the beast and gave it some extra water now and then. Slowly the flower spike developed showing hundreds of small buds that changed from green to red before opening to show off prominent red stamens. New Holland Honeyeaters visited the blooms and snacked on the nectar, perhaps pollinating the flowers. Fingers crossed on that.

What has not happened is the flower stems turning at 90 degrees to form a toothbrush shaped flower head. That has been a small disappointment for me.

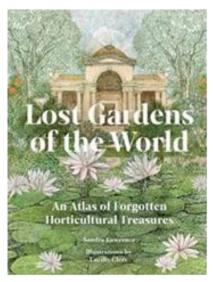
Maybe it will do so in another forty-five years? It's just as well I have seen it flower once in my lifetime. I may never see it again.

Xeronema callistemon is rarely seen in gardens which puzzles me as it seems to grow quite well, if slowly, in our climate. Could it be that it is just to slow for gardeners in a hurry, too much of a hurry for Nature to run its course?



Lost Gardens of the World: An Atlas of Forgotten Horticultural Treasures. By <u>Sandra Lawrence</u> (Author), <u>Lucille Clerc</u> (Illustrator), London, 2024.

Book Review by Trevor Nottle.



It must be Christmas; here come the books, a little bit of something for everyone, in a full range of colours and sizes to fit every taste. And in this book lies the proof. The book is about lost gardens: lost gardens, found gardens, restored gardens, ruined gardens, derelict gardens, barely there gardens, almost there gardens, almost gone gardens. But lest my review should seem cynical let it be understood that the apparent risk of tedium and a formulaic style is avoided and in its stead the

author engages her readers with a lively style and wide-ranging selection of mostly lesser known gardens.

Forty gardens are described which provides a good survey of places that are disposed around the world existing in some state of ruin, dereliction and restoration. Only Ninfa, a famous garden in the ruins of an ancient town in central Italy is excluded since the author argues it has always been gardened by its ducal family of owners. The inclusion of the gardens at Villa d'Este may seem a little odd. Overall, the selection is interesting, amusing and occasionally somewhat sad; a comfortable array that will sustain interest for hours.

Each garden is accompanied by beautiful illustrations by Lucille Clerc – accurately observed, finely limned and delicately coloured.

For those who have travelled and seen some of these gardens the book and its illustrations will rouse many happy memories and associations. For those who are planning to travel the book will surely supply much food for thought. And those who are unable to travel to see such things the book will become a valued resource for dreaming.

A gardener could not be given a better gift this Christmas. I gave a copy to myself & have found it a most enjoyable journey to many places I've been lucky to visit.



Wishing you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas. Open Gardens SA looks forward to sharing many more beautiful gardens with you in 2025!



# Congratulations to two of our Open Gardens SA Committee Members

Open Gardens SA would like to offer our congratulations to two of our Committee Members, **Jamie McIlwain** and **John Zwar** for recent Awards and recognition of their contributions to the industry.

Jamie McIlwain received seven awards at the Master Landscapers SA (MLSA) Awards of Excellence, presented on the evening of Saturday 16 November 2024 at SkyCity.

Jamie's awards in 2024 were:

- Residential Landscape Design under \$70,000
- Residential Landscape Construction under \$70,000
- Residential Landscape Design \$70,000-\$150,000
- Residential Landscape Construction \$70,000-\$150,000
- Residential Landscape Design exceeding \$250,000
- Residential Landscape Construction exceeding \$250,000
- Judges Choice Award.

The MLSA Awards of Excellence celebrate the pinnacle of landscaping achievement in South Australia. From apprentices to trade contractors, and small businesses to the biggest names in the landscaping industry, there's an award to suit everyone.

These prestigious annual awards recognise and honour the outstanding work of landscaping professionals who have demonstrated excellence, innovation, and a commitment to quality in their projects. The Awards of Excellence aim to inspire and elevate industry standards, showcasing the best in landscape design, construction, and maintenance.

The MLSA Awards of Excellence have grown to become a highlight of the landscaping calendar. Over the years, the awards have evolved, adding new categories to reflect emerging trends and innovations in the industry. From modest beginnings, the awards now attract entries from the most talented and dedicated professionals in South Australia, making it a true celebration of landscaping excellence.



Congratulations also to **John Zwar OAM**, recipient of the prestigious *Frank Ugody Award for Lifetime Contribution to the Industry* at the 2024 MLSA Awards of Excellence one of the most distinguished Honors in the landscaping industry. This award recognises an individual who has been exemplary in the advancement of the Industry over an extended period of time.



John's contributions have shaped the industry for decades, from initiating the **Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden** in Port Augusta to his impactful career as a lecturer in Horticulture, Environmental Management, and Landscape Design at TAFE SA.

With a passion for arid land horticulture and expertise in environmental management, John's work has left a lasting legacy for the industry to enjoy and build upon.

A well-deserved recognition for an extraordinary career.

Congratulations Jamie and John – you both contribute so much expertise, knowledge and experience to Open Gardens SA and it's wonderful to see your achievements publicly acknowledged and appreciated.



# Congratulations on a Job Well Done - Urumbulla Indigenous Garden Propagation Facility!

Last year, 2023, the Urumbulla Indigenous Garden at the John Pirie High School in Port Pirie received a \$3,000 grant/donation from Open Gardens SA which has been used to build a secure propagation facility adjacent to the Indigenous Garden. The retired



former school Principal oversaw and undertook the project which has been built to a high standard and is a vast improvement over the previous temporary facility.

The Urumbulla Project Manager Bruce Mules and students are thrilled with the outcome and greatly appreciate the Open Gardens SA assistance which paid for materials for the new shade house. The propagation facility looks fantastic and is going to be a



fabulous asset for the garden, as these photos show (taken September 2024), Open Gardens SA loves to receive updates and photos of the projects we have

assisted in this way. It is always good to see our grant donations so well used. Job well done!





# Christmas Gift Ideas!

Are you struggling to find that ideal gift for a loved family member, special friend or your favourite neighbour? Times have been tough the past couple of years and Christmas - often promoted as "a most wonderful time of the year" can be stressful, both emotionally and financially. Don't be influenced by all the slick media advertising subtly suggesting you must spend a large sum of money to show your love and appreciation at this time of the year. So here are a few gift suggestions....

### Home Baked Gifts.

Not many people can resist delicious home baked food. Biscuits are not difficult to make and there are thousands of recipes online – but why not opt for old, well tested family recipes! The baking options are endless - shortbread biscuits are traditional at Christmas, as are rich fruit cakes or Christmas puddings. Homemade jams and relishes are not difficult to make, and you may have the main ingredients growing in your veggie patch. All can be made ahead of time and when stored correctly, will be perfect for gift giving. If baking is not your thing, organisations such as the Lions Club produce good quality fruit cakes and puddings to raise funds for worthy causes and are a good gift alternative.

#### Plants for the keen gardener.

Pot plants for the house or plants for the garden are always a great gift for a gardener – and they don't have to be too expensive! **Hydrangeas** are in flower now and readily available at most garden nurseries. Once considered an old-fashioned plant, gardeners are realising that the hydrangea, with their attractive bold foliage and huge flower heads, are perfect for the shady garden. **Poinsettia** plants are another Christmas favourite. Many varieties of poinsettia are available, with variegated foliage and bracts ranging from creamy white to red and blush pink. **Australian Native plants** are also a good option – select varieties to attract birds and increase habitat for small wildlife in the garden. If you plan ahead, **propagating you own plants** to give as gifts is a very personal, thoughtful, choice.



#### Gardening Tools and Products.

Keen gardeners always appreciate gifts for the garden – gardening tools can be expensive, however smaller tools may be affordable, but always aim for good quality. Garden products such as special fertilisers or plant tonics are always in demand. Even items such as gardening gloves, kneeling pads, knee pads, watering cans, garden pots or garden hoses would be appreciated!

#### Tickets to our special events.

The perfect gift for that hard to shop for

friend or relative! Tickets can be purchased online for two wonderful events in 2025 – **Theatre in the Garden** and the **SA Landscape Festival**.

In January 2025, *Open Gardens SA* and *Blue Sky Theatre* will present outdoor performances of *Jack and The Absolutes* in three SA gardens, Victor Harbor, Hahndorf, and Blackwood. Tickets are **\$40.** Visit our website for more information and to book tickets:

https://opengardensa.org.au/news/a-groovy-kind-of-love-in-gardensthis-summer

*Open Gardens SA* and *Master Landscapers of SA* are delighted to bring you our third **SA Landscape Festival** on the 05 and 06 April 2025. Tickets are \$10 per garden or \$50 for an all-garden weekend pass and will be available soon at the SA Landscape Festival website: https://salandscapefestival.com.au/

#### Books and Magazine Subscriptions.

A good number of new books are published each year just in time for Christmas – visit your local bookshop (support local, small businesses) and see what is available. There are also a number of Op Shops that sell second-hand books – often very good quality at very low prices, and you might just find that hard to obtain, out of print, special interest garden book!



A magazine subscription is a gift that will continue to delight the receiver for many months and not just at Christmas.



A calendar or diary with a garden theme would also be an inexpensive gift that is very useful! There are lots of options available including this calendar (*photo above*) from the Diggers Club.

#### Your time.

Offering to spend some time helping in the garden of a friend or relative can be a very thoughtful gift, particularly if the gift of time and assistance is for an elderly person or someone who has challenges in maintaining their garden. A very special gift that offers not only the time and effort spent in the garden, but also valuable company and friendship.



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Best Wishes for a Happy Christmas.

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: Open Gardens SA Inc PO Box 605, STIRLING SA 5152

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

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

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

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