



## Spring 2017 Newsletter

### A message from the President

Hi to all our members and welcome to the start of Spring and some wonderful new Gardens to visit. Planning is also well underway for the Autumn 2018 season so it is shaping up to be a great year for Open Gardens Canberra.

As the new President I would like to formally thank our former Secretary, Sheree and President Trevor for their hard work in the demanding roles and wish them well in their new agendas.

I would also like to welcome Sue Freeland, the new Secretary, and thank her for taking on the role and Ross and Sue Abbott who are learning the ropes to become new Garden Selectors.

Our other Committee Members have remained the same hardworking crew and we look forward to the new "Open Gardens Canberra Year".

Last term was a consolidation of all the early work put in by Shirley Pipitone and her committee and we look forward to a wonderful new term with strong committee structures in place and new Gardens to explore over the next 12 months.

Chris Lord, President

### Membership

Spring is in the air and soon we will be opening our first gardens of the season.

Membership of Open Gardens Canberra is very important to ensure the operational costs of the Association are funded. It also helps us to improve things like signage to better direct people to the location of Open Gardens. The price of membership remains at \$25.00 and that's a bargain.

Membership is due on 31 August each year and may be paid in one of three ways:

1. by cheque/ postal order mailed to our postal address, PO Box 344 Jamison Centre ACT 26141.
2. by Bank Transfer to BSB 633 000 A/c no. 155187628 Reference is: Your name/s.
3. by cash at the first Open Garden you attend in the season.

A reminder that your Membership Card remains valid and you will be issued with a coloured identifier to mark your financial status for the coming year. This will be issued when you first attend an Open Garden after payment is processed. The Yellow identifier expires 31 August 2017.

If you haven't already done so we encourage you to renew your membership for the coming season.

Ian Davenport - Membership Officer / Committee member

### Spring Open Gardens

Our spring season will soon be under way with the following events during October and November. Opening times are 10 am to 4 pm both Saturday and Sunday.

## October 28th and 29<sup>th</sup>

**Yellow Box** - 447 Spring Range Road , Spring Range, 2618.

'Yellow Box' comprises about a hectare of a great variety of densely planted native plants on an elevated rocky knoll. The garden, started in 1997, includes many meandering, pleasant paths taking visitors to many garden sections, including vegetable beds and an orchard. The 19 ha. property, featuring some native pastures, also includes landcare shelter belts on its perimeter.

## November 4th and 5<sup>th</sup>

**Christine's Garden** - 48 Weathers St, Gowrie.

A very large suburban garden with an amazing variety of plants. Rock walls allow for built up garden beds with improved soil and drainage. English box hedges divide areas including a parterre garden.

## November 11th & 12<sup>th</sup>

**Wanna Wanna Homestead** - 149 Wanna Wanna Road, Carwoola.

Historic European style garden with a heritage listed slab hut from 1830. The garden is laid out in southern highlands style and surrounded by trees dating back to the early 19th Century. A profusion of old fashioned roses complements the setting.

**Tour Rouge** - 21 Meadows Lane, Carwoola

A delightful one acre Mediterranean style garden designed around three main axes. Structural elements reflect the owners' interest in Italy and France and including two sandstone terraces, a columned arbour, and a two storey round tower with belfry – the red tower reflected in the garden's name.

**Pillans Garden** - 30 Aspen Rise, Jerrabomberra.

Planting of this large all-native garden began in 2003 -today there are over 1000 individual species, including many acacia and grevillea species, making for a spectacular spring display. One section of the garden has been developed as a dry 'rainforest' gully using species with glossy, dark green leaves.

## November 18th & 19<sup>th</sup>

**Melssen Garden** - 5 Breden Place, Queanbeyan.

The gardener has worked since 2007 to turn a bare area into a beautiful cottage style garden dominated by bush, climbing, pillar, standard and groundcover roses. Located on a sloping site, the garden has been designed so that one person can maintain the small site to its maximum potential.

## November 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>

**Persephone** - 17 Julius Street, Pearce.

This semi-formal garden features exotic trees, shrubs and perennials. Hedging and mass plantings create different spaces to relax and observe the bird life. The private backyard provides a tranquil environment for entertaining, a network of paths and a small lawn for adventure and play, and an integrated productive garden featuring chickens, a greenhouse and a variety of fruit and vegetables.

## Open your garden with OGC

Sharing your garden by opening it with Open Gardens Canberra can be a rewarding experience for you as the garden's owners. You and your garden will be a source of inspiration, motivation and learning for hundreds of visitors. You may also decide to use your garden opening to raise funds for a charity of your choice. Open Gardens Canberra share day entrance fees with the garden owner 50/50 as well as giving the garden owner a flat \$50.

If you are interested in opening your garden, please contact us at: [info@opengardenscanberra.org.au](mailto:info@opengardenscanberra.org.au) or write to us at PO Box 344 Jamison Centre ACT 2614 – we'd love to hear from you. Now is the best time to contact us about opening your garden in Spring 2018. We also have a few spaces left in the calendar for Autumn 2018.

## **Plea for volunteers!**

Support your organisation and help out at an open garden!

We need more volunteers to assist at the entrance table at our open gardens. Two people are needed to welcome visitors, collect the entrance fee or record member visitors, encourage new memberships, answer general questions (where's the afternoon tea?) and hand out any garden information provided. These tasks are straight-forward but essential. There are two shifts each day: 9.45am - 1.15pm and 1.00 - 4.30pm, so we need 8 volunteers for each garden opening. As we normally have two gardens open on the same weekend, we need 16 volunteers for that weekend. So you can see why we need your help!

Some members volunteer at many gardens over the season, as they enjoy it so much. But we need to help them out too!

If you wish to volunteer, or simply find out more, contact us at [info@opengardenscanberra.org.au](mailto:info@opengardenscanberra.org.au) or write to us at PO Box 344 Jamison Centre ACT 2614. Volunteers need to be OGC members to be covered by our insurance.

We cannot open gardens without you!

Sally Stephens- Volunteer coordinator / Committee member

## **Applications are open for our Horticulture Scholarship**

Open Gardens Canberra is pleased to be partnering with the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) to provide a \$2,000 scholarship to assist a CIT horticultural student with tuition fees, books and equipment in their second and third year. Applications for first year horticultural students are open and the successful applicant will be announced in later this year. The recipient of the scholarship will be encouraged to participate in Open Gardens Canberra activities. More details can be found on the CIT website under Horticulture Scholarship

## **Open Gardens Canberra Facebook Page**

Did you know that Open Gardens Canberra has its own Facebook page? Like our page and receive regular updates on open gardens and other gardening events on in the Canberra region!

## **Tom's Tips**

### **Give grasses a glance**

Gardening magazines, including those overseas, have long been espousing grassy plants for landscaping, for their finer textures, their movement in the breeze and their adaptability for many situations. Spring is a time for renewal so consider the option of grasses or grass like plants in your garden.

First of all, please avoid the grasses that are serious invasive species.

Second, check out gardens, including open gardens of course, featuring ornamental grasses and inspect their usage and potential. Our Australian National Botanic Garden is a good place to start. The National Arboretum is developing a fine, feathery frolic at Block 100.

The possibilities are endless, and other countries are increasingly using grasses in public landscaped areas, often treated as a semi-natural meadow mixed with many bulbs and wildflowers which can be mown occasionally. Ornamental grasses are hardy, can quickly change the spirit of a garden, soften hard lines and fill difficult gaps. They can complement colourful borders.

Typically these grassy plants are grown as small groups, contrasting best with other plants and other garden elements.

‘Grasses’ can include tussocky grasses and more coarse, strappy plants and very ornamental semi aquatic grasses such as the various carex species. There are many native grasses suitable for gardens. A plant I picked up (the idea of course) at an open garden is *Stipa verticillata* which attains a height of over two metres and thickens into a flowing gossamer column. There are also *Austrostipa bigeniculata*, *Stipa gigantea*, *Xanthorrhoea* and many other species.

There are ornamental grass nurseries around. Check on the internet. Also, check ‘modern meadows’ and what Francis Bacon, Miriam Rothschild and many others have had to say about wildflower meadows.

Ps, if you already have swards of fine billowing blue green grasses drifting from the nature strip, check that it isn’t African Lovegrass, (*Erogrostis curvula*), which should be removed.

Tom Baker - Garden Selector/Committee member

## **Other Open Gardens in the Canberra Region**

### **29 Holden Crescent Wanniasa**

Maria and Jim’s 35 year old garden is to open on 17, 18 and 19 November this year, 10am till 3pm, all proceeds to Motor Neurone Disease NSW. The house and garden is on a steepish west slope facing west towards Mt Taylor. The front and back gardens are terraced with brick walling and good paths. There are lines of fruit trees, vegetable gardens and composting systems on the lower terrace level. The largish lawn on the upper terrace just below the house is surrounded by cottage garden beds and more fruit trees.

## **National Trust Events**

### **12th Annual Reid Open Houses and Gardens**

1.15 pm to 4.30 pm, Sunday 5 November 2017

Once again, the National Trust (ACT) in collaboration with the Reid Residents' Association (RRA) and the property owners will open three privately-owned houses and gardens from the 1920s & 1930s in Reid's Heritage precinct. Meet the owners and view inside the houses and also their gardens.

Bookings essential. Full details and costs are available on the National Trust website or phone 6230 0533.

### **Private Gardens of the Monaro - Self-drive tour**

Tuesday 24 October 2017

Visit three private gardens in the Monaro High Country. The gardens are located on historic pastoral properties where sheep and cattle graze over the extensive Monaro plains. At altitudes of around 1000 metres, the gardens are “cold climate” with four distinct seasons giving fabulous autumn colour, spring flowering bulbs, leafy summery greenery and cold winters with frosty mornings and sometimes snowy days. Full details and costs are available on the National Trust website or phone 6230 0533.

## **Future Newsletters**

Newsletters will be sent out quarterly with the summer newsletter due in December 2017. The summer newsletter will include details of gardens open during our autumn season.