

A message from the President

Hi to all our members, we did have a very hot dry summer which has now extended into autumn. I hope all our gardens have survived and members have not lost too many plants. We have anecdotal news some members in our region have lost a lot of plants and even some well-established trees, due to the extended dry period and general lack of water available for gardens. We feel for them, and hope we have some substantial rain in the near future.

The autumn program went very well although the weather intervened on a couple of occasions. Our numbers in comparison to previous years are very positive and the Committee is to be congratulated on all their hard work. We also need to congratulate all the garden owners who have nominated their gardens during autumn and of course the various volunteers who have assisted.



We have a strong program arranged for next Spring and in the future, but we welcome any member suggestions as to noteworthy gardens in their vicinity for possible future openings.

I look forward to the “Rest” period for the Committee for the winter and the wonderful gardens to be opened later in 2018.

Chris Lord, President

Photo - Oaks Estate Garden – opened 14 & 15 April 2018

Membership process change

The Committee has decided to streamline the way Open Gardens Canberra Memberships are processed.

There will no longer be membership cards produced due to the amount of work involved and the costs associated, not the least of which is postage. It was found that most members did not wear or carry their membership card when visiting gardens and the cards were prone to being misplaced thus requiring a re-issue at further expense.

New and renewing members will receive a receipt when paying fees. This receipt has been custom printed to specifically identify our organisation and should be carried by new members for the weekend of issue as proof of joining.

Volunteers at all open gardens will continue to have the current list of all members, financial and un-financial, to allow them to record your attendance and to process renewals as required.

Volunteer Roundup

Autumn saw some wild weather but nothing deters Open Gardens Canberra volunteers. As you know, the gardens cannot be opened to the public without volunteers being at the entrance desk on the day: welcoming visitors, taking payments, renewing memberships and generating new ones, giving advice and information and finalising the records at the end of the day.

Five gardens were open, the first being in Watson, coinciding with the inner north flood on Sunday 25 February. Our volunteers were reliably there to welcome those hardy visitors.

Five open gardens translated to 40 shifts, each of 3½ hours. 31 people covered these shifts, with one person doing three (many thanks!) and seven doing two shifts over the season.

Included in these figures are five committee members with the rest being Open Gardens Canberra members who had indicated their willingness to help out at open gardens. During the season, five new members added themselves to our volunteer corps.

Thank you all for your generosity in giving up your time to help make Open Gardens Canberra such a success. And for making my job a pleasure!

Sally Stephens, OGC volunteer coordinator

Photo - Lorraine & Geoff's Garden – opened 24 & 25 March 2018

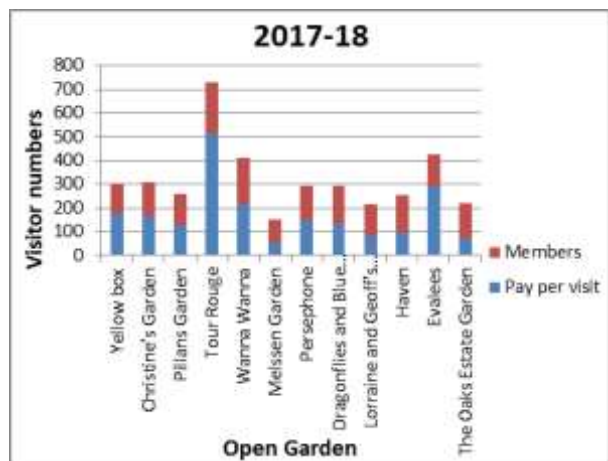
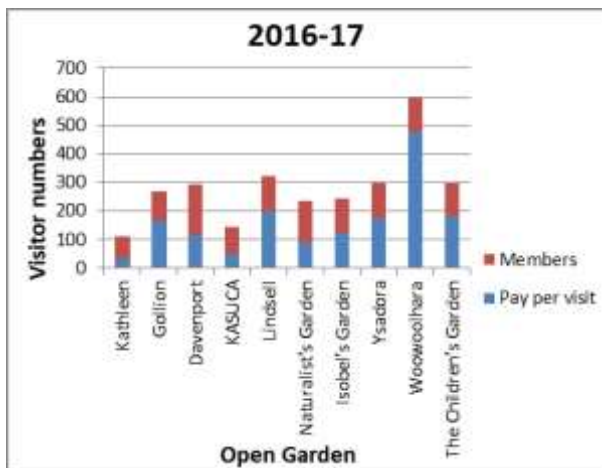


Open Garden Visitor Numbers

When members and visitors attend an open garden we keep a count of numbers. We now have three years of data and can start to draw some conclusions as to how successful Open Gardens Canberra is. There has been a steady increase in visitor numbers over the three financial years. Visitor numbers averaged 267 per garden in 2015-16, 282 in 2016-17 and 321 in this current financial year. Members were 43% of the total visitors in 2015-16 and 2016-17 and 46% of total visitors this financial year.

Our most successful open garden to date was Tour Rouge in Spring last year. This garden attracted 730 visitors, 71% non-members.

For those who like a graph, the following graphs show total visitor numbers broken into members and non-members for each of the open gardens over the last two financial years.



Supporting Charities

Open Gardens Canberra charges non-members an entry fee to each open garden. We pay a proportion of those takings plus a contribution from membership fees to the owner of the garden. Owners can use these funds to support their nominated charity or to maintain or further enhance their garden. Over the last twelve months Open Gardens Canberra has paid over \$9,000 to open garden owners. These funds have supported a range of charities.

One example is a school supported by Liz and John who opened their garden 'Haven' in March this year. Liz and John had visited the Eratap School in Vanuatu and seen their very limited resources. As a retired school teacher Liz felt it would be great to be able to assist the school and investigated ways of doing this. She approached Monash Primary School and they agreed to donate a range of early primary reading and exercise books to the school. Liz just had to arrange and pay for the postage. Liz nominated the school as her charity for her open garden and together with plant sales, donations, a proportion of the proceeds from the sale of some mosaics, and the contribution from Open Gardens Canberra raised over \$1,000. This paid for the postage of the books and provided funds to the school for the purchase of science equipment for the senior students. A great outcome.



Education Program

As part of the H2OK: Keeping our waterways healthy education program, funding was provided to urban and rural residential owners in the ACT and region to implement innovative, best practice stormwater management practices on their block as demonstrations of best practice others can learn from.

Through a partnership with Open Gardens Canberra, people will be able to visit the sites to see first-hand how others are re-designing their gardens to make better use of water, minimise contaminated run-off and ensure only rain goes down the stormwater drain.

Five of these demonstration gardens will open on Sunday 2 June and a further four on Sunday 17 June.

This [link to the event](#) allows you to book onto the free bus ride (and free lunch). There is also the information as to what gardens will be open, and at which times. The alternative to the bus tours is to visit the gardens (free entry) via your own transport, taking note of the limited opening times for each garden.

If you have any questions at all please do not hesitate to contact the Program Officer for H2OK, Lyndsey Day at lyndsey.day@act.gov.au or alternatively on 0466 365 951.

Spring 2018 Open Garden Season

We are planning to bring you an interesting selection of open gardens this Spring.

One garden of note is Cuppacumbalong Homestead in Tharwa which we plan to open in early November. Many members will remember these beautiful old gardens. Since purchasing Cuppacumbalong Homestead in September 2017, the new owners have embarked on a massive restoration. The main structure of the garden will be retained allowing the sweeping vistas from the verandah to be showcased in their full beauty, encapsulating the hills beyond. You will be able to see how all of this work is progressing at the open garden. In the meantime there will be a welcoming winter souk held at Cuppacumbalong showcasing artists, growers, producers and makers on 27 May 2018 from 10am-3pm. Further details are available on their Facebook page

Full details of our Spring season will be in the next newsletter.

Seeking Gardens to open

Your garden is so lovely
It's such a nice place to be

So why not share its pleasures
and tap its 'genius loci'.

So, please contact us on info@opengardenscanberra.org.au if you are interested in opening your garden, particularly if you, or your friends, have gardens suitable for visitation by those less able.

Photos in this newsletter

Our thanks to Sue Freeland, our Secretary and Facebook editor, for her photos of recently opened gardens including this wonderful panoramic view of Evalees which was opened on 7 & 8 April 2018.

