



Autumn 2019 Newsletter

A message from the President

Happy New Year, hope all our wonderful members had a joyous Christmas. After our hectic Spring garden presentation it was a welcome break over the festive season. We are looking forward to a wonderful display of 6 private Autumn gardens and a Community Garden over February to April. See below for a summary, the full details are on the website. It was great to get some welcome rain over the last month or so balanced by some very hot weather. We have awarded our very first Scholarship to a 2nd year CIT Horticulture student, Joel Paterson, who is keen to be involved in Open Gardens Canberra. Congratulations to Joel, and a big thank you to Julie Collins, Head of Horticulture at Canberra Institute of Technology, for her assistance in promoting this and coordinating the applications.

I am also pleased to advise that our 2019 Spring gardens schedule is practically full with a little fine tuning necessary, so our hard working Garden Selection team are looking at Autumn 2020. There is also a possibility that a new form of Garden Opening will be tried this year with several gardens in a particular region all opening on the same weekend with a different payment system. Keep an eye on the website for further information as it comes to hand. Lastly, at our AGM in October all our previous Committee were re elected. Congratulations to all. As previously stated there are still a couple of vacancies on the Committee which we would love to fill, please do not hesitate to put your name forward. Perhaps you may wish to just attend a couple of meetings to see how we operate before committing. It is not terribly onerous and very rewarding, the gardens cannot open without a healthy committee.

Chris Lord, President

Summer/Autumn Open Gardens

Our next season will soon be under way with the following events during February, March and April. Opening times are 10 am to 4 pm both Saturday and Sunday. Entry for members of Open Gardens Canberra is free (membership \$25/year) and for non-members is \$8.

9-10 February 2019

Trudy's Permaculture Garden

18 Hawdon St Ainslie, ACT

A productive and water-wise permaculture garden on a 600m² block. Trudy's garden features an extensive variety of fruit trees including citrus, cherries, apricots, apples, nectarines, plums, a three-way pear, nashi, cherry guava, persimmon and loquat, along with Mediterranean favourites such as a pomegranate and olives. A regular pruning program ensures each bears fruit in easy reach. Vegetables, herbs and berries grow abundantly in this cornucopia of a garden.



2-3 March 2019

Joan's Garden

51 Dash Crescent Fadden, ACT

In Joan's well-established garden the emphasis is on green. As a consequence, trees and shrubs vie with the understorey for space. There are maples, crepe myrtles, crab apples, laurels, to name but a few, with salvia, roses, irises etc. adding a touch of colour. After lots of pruning it is possible to meander through this restful garden situated on a 799m² block.



Christine's Garden

48 Weathers Street, Gowrie, ACT

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. Large mirrors on the boundary fences create illusions of depth. Deciduous trees provide for Autumn colour. Refreshments in the form of Devonshire Teas will be available, and there will be plenty of plants for sale.



Kambah Community Garden

Cnr Halloran Circuit and Springbett Street, Kambah, ACT



The Kambah Community Garden has been operated by the Canberra Organic Growers Society since 2001. It is located adjacent to the Kambah Woolshed and set in a beautiful park landscape with a view of Mount Taylor. They have about 27 gardeners allocated individual plots which they put to productive use growing food for themselves and their families. Food is grown all year round using sustainable organic gardening practices that build and continuously improve the quality of the soil and the environment. An emphasis is on collaboration within the garden with all plot holders sharing communal vegetable and herb garden cultivation, composting and general maintenance.

16-17 March 2019

Anne's and Dana's Gardens

14 Spica Street, Giralang, ACT 2617

These two standard sized gardens have been developed over 30 years. Anne's garden incorporates numerous open beds at the front and back, featuring a wide variety of perennials and shrubs, vegetables and fruit trees. Dana's garden next door is largely dedicated to the production of fruit and vegetables through the seasons.

The garden on Anne's flat block comprises a system of well-maintained beds set out to



maximise the floral and foliage display and viewing and exposure to sunlight. The large

variety of plants provides much interest. There is a zone dedicated to productive vegetables (using raised wicking beds) and fruit trees.

Dana's garden is noteworthy in its systematic layout of vegetables, herbs, fruit trees and berries. There is a large variety of fruit and at least 25 different vegetables and herbs and 15 species of fruit. These are all designed and displayed to maximise exposure to sunlight. Production is planned for all four seasons. Olives are processed and cabbages are pickled to produce sauerkraut.

13-14 April 2019

Cambrey Farm

18 Beltana Road, Pialligo, ACT

This 6 acre farmlet was established in the 1930s and has been in the owner's family since 1954. Major tree plantings date from then, comprising majestic pinoaks, ash and liquidambar as well as mature gums. The original cottage garden has been supplemented by gardens established around a second house built in 2000. Winding paths lead through pergolas, loggias and formal



box rose gardens to the Old Barn, built in the mid 1930s and recently restored to display its beautiful old timbers and ironwork. The garden is home to alpacas and bees with honey and alpaca poo also for sale.

Langdene

17 Donald Road, Queanbeyan, NSW

This cottage style garden surrounds heritage listed homestead buildings. Among the plantings of large trees, shrubs and flowering perennials are zones for conifers, ferns, true geraniums, kniphofias and sages. A range of groundcovers is a feature of the gardens, helping to reduce soil water loss and control weeds. There are special plants of interest including clematis and fuschia species.



Sustainability features include composting bins, mulching and 38,000 litre system of rainwater tanks linked to irrigation. Jazz pianist Wayne Kelly will be playing on Sat from 11am to 3pm and on Sun from 12.30 to 2 pm.

From our open garden owners

The Relaxed Garden - opened 20 and 21 October 2018

Though we gain a lot of pleasure from being in our garden, like so many other suburban gardens, there are plants that struggle, areas that never look as good as one hoped, and so many jobs always to do. So we would never have agreed to opening it to the public without strong encouragement from a friend on the Open Gardens Canberra committee, But we're glad we did. And Open Gardens Canberra gained more than 120 new and renewing members.

It was a lot of work to make it presentable, but as far as we can judge the great majority of the 426 visitors enjoyed themselves and it proved a great fund raiser for our chosen charity "Canberra Refugee Support". Of course, since then we have been enjoying the benefit of all that work. Of the various factors that might have made the two days a success, the one that we are most conscious of is the enormous help provided by our friends and family - especially on the day. This was particularly important, because nearly half of the over \$2000 raised for charity was the result of our offering Devonshire tea and places where people could sit and enjoy it. About a dozen people helped in various ways. The second contributor to success was undoubtedly the weather, because although the latter part of Saturday afternoon was washed out by rain, the rest of the time it was sunny and not too windy or hot. A number of visitors commented on how having many of the plants labelled (particularly the less common ones) was a great help and many also appreciated the before and after photos placed in different parts of the garden.

Angelika Dunker and Chris Ansted

Served at the Serendipitous Garden - opened 24 and 25 November 2018

Almond Pears

3 cups almond meal

2 cups of pure icing sugar, sifted

2 egg whites

1 large orange, rind finely grated

¼ teaspoon almond essence

24 cloves

Preheat oven to 160C. Line flat baking tray with baking paper.

Combine almond meal and ½ cup icing sugar in a bowl. Make a well in the centre. Add egg whites, orange rind and almond essence. Using your hands, mix until dough comes together

in a smooth ball. Roll walnut-sized pieces of mixture into 24 small pear shapes. Insert 1 clove (stem side up) into top of each.

Place almond pears upright, 5 cm apart, on prepared tray. Bake on lowest shelf in the oven for 20 mins or until firm to touch. Place remaining 1 ½ cups icing sugar in a deep, small bowl. Dip hot almond pears one at a time into the icing sugar and turn to coat. Return almond pears to warm tray. Dust heavily with remaining icing sugar (I normally don't do this bit; too much sugar!). Allow to cool on trays.

You can store almond pears in a single layer in icing sugar in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

Alan and Lynne Wade

Volunteers Needed

Do you ever think you'd like to help out at the entrance table at our Open Gardens? Maybe you don't realise that those valiant volunteers you see at the entrance keep the whole thing going (as do those who open their gardens). We have a dedicated group but would like to increase the pool we draw on. We need two people on duty all the time, each shift being 3½ hours, either morning or afternoon. If we have two open gardens, we need 16 volunteers over the weekend.

With more volunteers the work load can be more easily shared and gaps avoided. Most find the job enjoyable and quite social. We try to match experienced people with first-timers and comprehensive guidelines are provided. There is also time for a handover between shifts.

If you feel you'd like to help out, please send an email to info@opengardenscanberra.org.au.

By putting your name down, you are under no obligation and you can opt out at any time.

Volunteers will receive an email before the season starts, seeking offers to help at the garden and time of their choice.

Think about it!

Membership

As we enter the Summer/Autumn phase of our gardens there is still the opportunity to benefit from membership renewal.

We have a further six Open Gardens for you to visit. At \$8 each for non-members the \$25 annual renewal fee makes financial sense.

Payment can be by:

1. Direct deposit: BSB: 633-000

Account number: 155187628

Account Name: Open Gardens Canberra Inc

Reference: Your name

2. Cheque by mail to: Membership Officer

Open Gardens Canberra

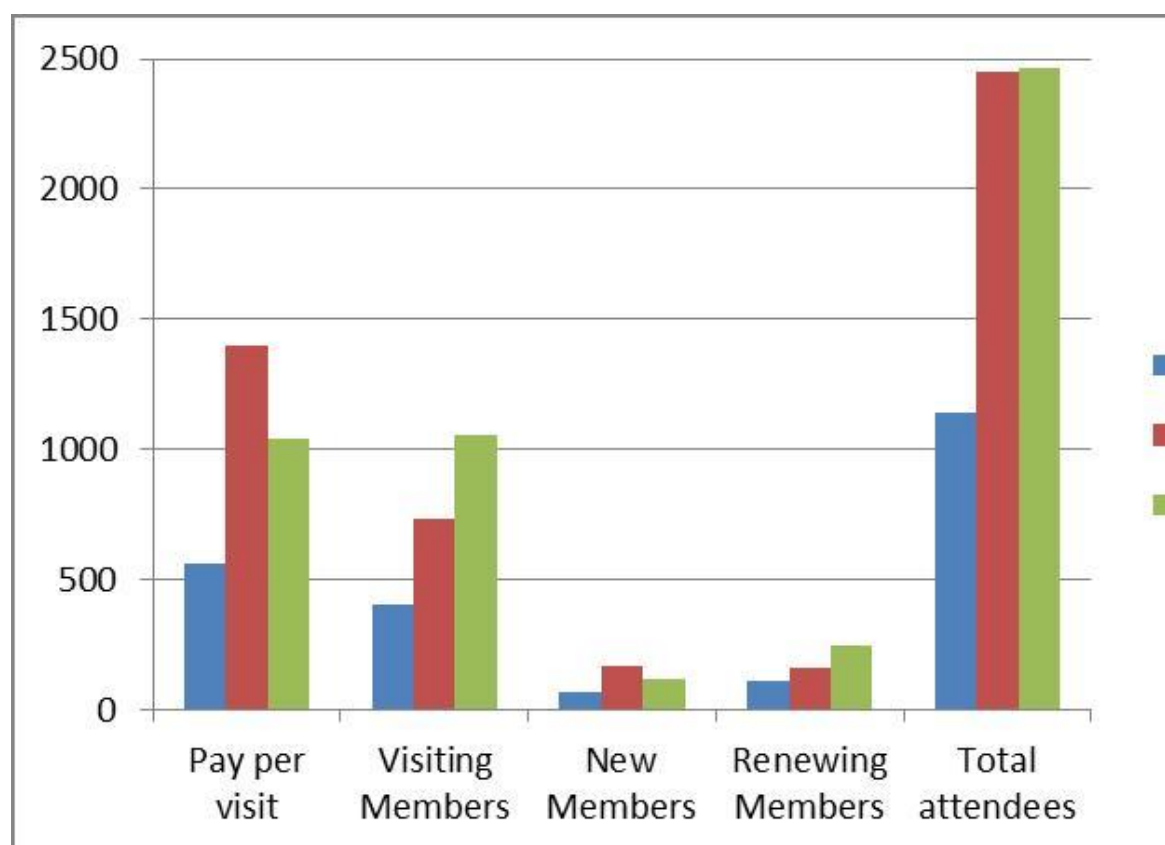
PO Box 344

Jamison Centre ACT 2614

3. Cash at an open garden

Visitor Statistics

When you visit an open garden we note the attendance of members and provide non members with a ticket. This allows us to gather statistics on attendance at the open gardens. We now have three years of fairly comprehensive information which shows trends in visitor numbers. The following graph shows Spring season attendance for the past three years. It is pleasing to see a continual increase in members visiting gardens and renewing their membership.



Some Tips

Hydrophobic soil – new.

As many gardeners do, from time to time, I needed to bring additional soil into my garden. In October 2018 it was rather dry as you will recall so I was not surprised when the cubic metre of soil dispersed a lot of dust as it was dumped into my trailer.

At home I offloaded the soil into our soil storage bins with some of it being placed in the garden where there was a need.

On watering the garden placed soil, I noticed that the water was not being absorbed at all in fact it, being on a sloping site, ran straight off. Despite all measures I could not get the soil to take water, not even with a wetting agent. As a test I submerged a pot of soil in a bucket of water treated with wetting agent and left it overnight. In the morning there was no evidence of water penetration whatsoever.

After several attempts to contact the supplier I fronted up in person to the yard in question with a sample. Whilst they were not interested in testing the sample they did offer a replacement load of the same product. I tested the proposed replacement offering to find it had the same undesirable properties as that which I already had. We agreed on a different product which passed the hydrophobic soil test and they provided me with a cubic metre free of charge.

The bins of hydrophobic soil went to assist my neighbours landfill for his home extension.

The moral to this story is that if you have a need for extra soil either use your own compost or take a test kit to the vendor's site and test the water absorption characteristics of the offering.

The test kit is simple, a small bottle of water and a broad shallow pot saucer or bowl. Place soil in the saucer and add water slowly. If it doesn't absorb water in a reasonable time, I wait two minutes, look for another product.

If your garden soil in place is hydrophobic there are many Google sources offering various solutions.

Ian Davenport

Help is at hand. Sustainable and Productive Gardens in our backyards

Many of our Open Gardens have demonstrated what is possible in terms of producing vegetables, herbs, fruit, poultry and even honey in our region. The Canberra City Farm is a local organisation which is promoting productive and sustainable food and energy systems in our urban context.

Canberra City Farm provides opportunities to start or rejuvenate your own urban garden in your backyards (and front yard, roof etc), by providing locally relevant information, by demonstrating what is possible, and by organising workshops and large events at the City Farm's site located on Dairy Road Fyshwick. There are also a small number of plots available to rent for growing vegetables and fruits. As well there are regular working bees every Monday, and monthly on a Friday. The Monday bees' tasks vary from week to week, and can include planting fruit trees and vegetables, constructing garden beds, pruning, and harvesting our various crops. Friday working bees specifically focus on construction. This is a wonderful opportunity to get involved with the Canberra City Farm on a regular basis and to get to know other people in your community.

By joining Canberra City Farm, for a very low annual cost, you automatically become a member of Urban Agriculture Australia and you benefit by: having a say in the direction of Urban Agriculture Australia (UAA) and Canberra City Farm, having access to free and discounted workshops and events and receiving an informative monthly newsletter.

UAA is a collaboration between many organisations including Canberra City Farm, CIT Solutions, Canberra Environment Centre, Canberra Organic Growers, Southern Harvest and See Change . For a full list, and much more information, see the website below.

www.urbanagriculture.org.au

Supporting our local schools

Kitchen Garden Foundation.

Many of our members will know of the Stephanie Alexander cookbooks – in fact The Cook's Companion is likely to be the vital book in many Canberra kitchens. Some years ago Stephanie formed the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation. This Foundation provides educational resources, professional development, support and inspiration for educators to deliver pleasurable food education to children in Australia. This has the ultimate goal for every child to form positive food habits, for life. The focus is for children to have a 'hands-on' experience in cooking, gardening and sharing a meal together so that they adopt lifelong skills and learn to love real, nutritious food. They also do a lot of learning along the way.

Many schools already have these well-known Kitchen Gardens. Open Gardens Canberra are keen to support the establishment of more gardens, as part of our commitment to supporting local charities and initiatives. If any OGC member knows of a local school that does not yet have a Kitchen Garden but could be interested in setting one up, please let us know as we are compiling a list of possible schools in the ACT and surrounding areas of NSW. We could

fund resources or professional development for a teacher to learn about instigating and running such a project.

See: www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au for more information about this amazing foundation. You'll see delicious-looking food the children have cooked from vegetables they've harvested themselves –such a simple but effective idea.

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