



Autumn 2020 Newsletter

A message from the President

Happy New Year to all our wonderful members. What a tumultuous time it has been since our last Newsletter. Initially the drought became worse, then the horrendous fires and more recently terrible hail storms did severe damage to gardens, trees and of course cars. Then finally some reasonable rain in the Canberra region and flooding in other areas that had been damaged by fires.

However it would be remiss not to mention our 2019 Spring gardens, where we opened the Cottage Garden in Yarralumla and the Miller's Garden in Garran with record numbers turning up to visit the lovely gardens. Next was the Woodland Walk in Melba, again terrific numbers and in November Terroux out in the country of Wallaroo which was very dry but reflected the drought situation at that time, a very game opening and a lot of work by the owners Barbara and Peter. Finally and fittingly the four gardens in Bungendore. This was our first experiment of a number of gardens in one precinct and whilst there were some teething problems it was a terrific success with nearly \$6000 going to Bungendore charities from the respective garden owners. We have agreed to do this again in 2020 but probably with only three gardens. See later in the newsletter for detailed statistics of garden attendance during the Spring 2019 season.

Our Autumn open garden season will be commencing on the weekend of 14/15 March. Once again there are some wonderful gardens – see details later in the newsletter.

I should also mention that as well as some of the entry money going to the garden owners respective charities we have also sponsored some other worthwhile projects. We donated some advanced trees to Featherston Gardens to replace some they lost, we have approved a couple of other "Garden" projects including to Canberra City Farm for works there and a Bush Aviary for Wildcare in Queanbeyan. Neither of these have been completed to date. Separately at our most recent meeting we approved donations of \$1000 each to the CWA Drought Relief Appeal and Tharwa Rural Fire Service. We have also provided a \$2000 donation to the Friends of Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens which were all but destroyed by the recent fires. Many Canberra members would be familiar with the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens. Thankfully the recently completed new buildings were saved.

The afternoon tea for our volunteers and garden owners at the Scented Rose Garden and Tea House on Wallaroo Rd was very enjoyable for all who attended with some very positive feedback. Whilst I mention volunteers, with the Autumn program almost under way we would welcome as many volunteers as possible to assist, so please do not leave it to "someone else".

We would love to have more submissions concerning funding of suitable "Garden" projects, so if you know of an organisation that might need our support please alert them that funds have been set aside and we would welcome worthwhile ideas.

Lastly due to our constitutional requirements our wonderful Treasurer for the last four years, Meryll Bradley, is unable to renominate for the position at our AGM in August and

we are obviously looking for a suitable replacement. If you have a financial background we would love your assistance. Merryl will be available for training and guidance.

Our website and Facebook sites are attracting plenty of attention and are a great source of information.

Chris Lord, President

Autumn Open Gardens

Our next season will soon be under way with the following events during March, April and May. 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.

14-15 March 2020

[Braddon Bounty](#)

67 Elimatta St, Braddon, ACT

This 11 year old cottage style garden, surrounding a 1920s 'arts and craft' dwelling, contains many fruit trees, vegetables and herbs, mingled with flowering plants, tree shaded nooks and works of art.

Garden and household sustainability features include: a poultry run and two bee hives blended into the rear garden; a rotational composting system and natural mulching; 10,000 litres of rain water storage with pumps and a very large solar power system which charges an electric car.



28-29 March 2020

[Lambrigg Garden](#)

Tidbinbilla Rd, Tharwa, ACT

The privately owned Lambrigg gardens surround the original William Farrer homestead, on what is still a working farm. The garden features numerous large trees, some dating to the original plantings, shrub beds and spacious lawns set on terraced slopes, all gently sloping to the nearby Murrumbidgee River.

4-5 April 2020

[Bruce Demonstration Garden](#)

Cnr Purdie and Battye Streets, Bruce, ACT

This demonstration garden run by the Horticulture Society of Canberra has vegetable and flower gardens and a small native garden. There are many experimental plantings. At the time of opening an extensive collection of dahlias and salvias will be in bloom.



[Anderson Garden](#)

57 Arthur Circle, Red Hill, ACT

This is a well known garden which has been re-developed by the owners over the last 22 years, to create interest and also to create theatre areas for outdoor entertainment. The lawns, shrubs, herbaceous beds and various large trees are complemented with formal hedges of camellias, feijoas and box. Two of the many features are a Manchurian Pear Alley and artwork woven into the garden.



A significant addition is the 150,000 litre underground water tank to support the integrated drip systems. This garden was previously owned by the former High Court Judge, Lionel Murphy and his wife Ingrid.

This will be your last chance to see this garden as the owners have plans for moving on.

9-10 May 2020

Looking for somewhere to take Mum on Mother's Day? She will love having a morning or afternoon tea in these gardens.

[The TransPlant Garden](#)

52 Faithfull Circuit, Kambah, ACT

The TransPlant Garden began from scratch in December 2015 with a bare block of Kambah clay. With help from a local horticulturist, the Doyles transplanted a lemon tree and dozens of camellias – all of which were at least 30 years old from their “Mr Fluffy” house in Waramanga. Nearly a hundred mature plants were also moved including: crepe myrtles, liriopes, dietes, agapanthus, westringias, hellebores, roses, tree ferns, bluebells, and oysters plants. Everything transplanted well and survived with lots of TLC, except the roses which never came back after winter. In following years the camellias and oyster plants weren't thriving so were removed and transplanted to other people's gardens. Over the past four years, with good soil preparation, underground



irrigation, and quality mulch the Doyles have turned bare Kambah clay into the beautiful small garden it is today.

The Wright Place

58 Faithfull Circuit, Kambah, ACT

Work commenced on this almost 1000 square metre property in April 1975 and has continued unabated since. The front garden consists of four terraces with the bottom terrace featuring a gabion wall and the top terrace being strongly influenced by the owners' travels in Asia. Of particular note are the Torii gate, spill bowl and 15 cut leaf maples of different varieties, which turn to splendid reds and oranges in autumn.

The enclosed private back garden consists of a series of outdoor rooms – a back deck off the house with spa; an entertainment area off the guest studio; lawn area, with dry stone creek and green walls; a Mediterranean style courtyard; a hidden service area; a Silver Birch forest; and a Fernery. There are over 200 containers of plants around the property, 58 trees and 6 water features, amongst other items of interest.



The whole property is supported by a dripper system with 5 water tanks (capacity 13500 Litres)

30-31 May 2020

Yellow Box

447 Spring Range Rd, Spring Range, NSW

Please check the website to confirm that the garden will be open.



'Yellowbox' comprises about a hectare of densely planted native plants of great variety, on an elevated rocky knoll with 360 degree views of the rural countryside. The garden, started

in 1997, includes many meandering, pleasant paths taking visitors to many garden sections, including vegetable beds and an orchard. The 45 acre property, featuring some native pastures, also includes landcare shelter belts on its perimeter.

Volunteers at open gardens – you are needed!

Our garden openings are drawing increasingly large crowds. There is a core group of very dedicated volunteers who keep us open and running. But we do need more people.

Two volunteers are based at the entry table to welcome visitors, take payments, receive or renew memberships and hand out garden information as available. Shifts are morning or afternoon and volunteers can do as many or as few as they choose. New volunteers are placed with experienced people to show them the ropes. Most seem to enjoy it greatly (they must as they keep coming back!).

Your offer to help will be much appreciated!

Contact Sally Stephens on info@opengardenscanberra.org.au

Membership

Thank you to all of those Members who have renewed their membership and welcome to all new members.

If you have not yet renewed you may pay your \$25 via bank transfer, cheque or in person at any of our open gardens. The volunteers who greet you at these locations will have a record of membership and will be able to quickly advise you of the status of your membership and accept payment if required.

A reminder that we no longer issue Membership cards as the process is too costly and time consuming. If you renew at an Open Garden please retain your receipt to admit you to the rest of the gardens on that weekend. We endeavour to update our member lists in the period between Open Garden weekends thereby having you listed on the records at the gate asap.

A decision was made by your Committee to apply the same conditions to renewals as it does for new members in relation to joining late in the season. This means that if you renew on or after 1 March 2020 your Membership will be current to the end of the 2021 membership year.

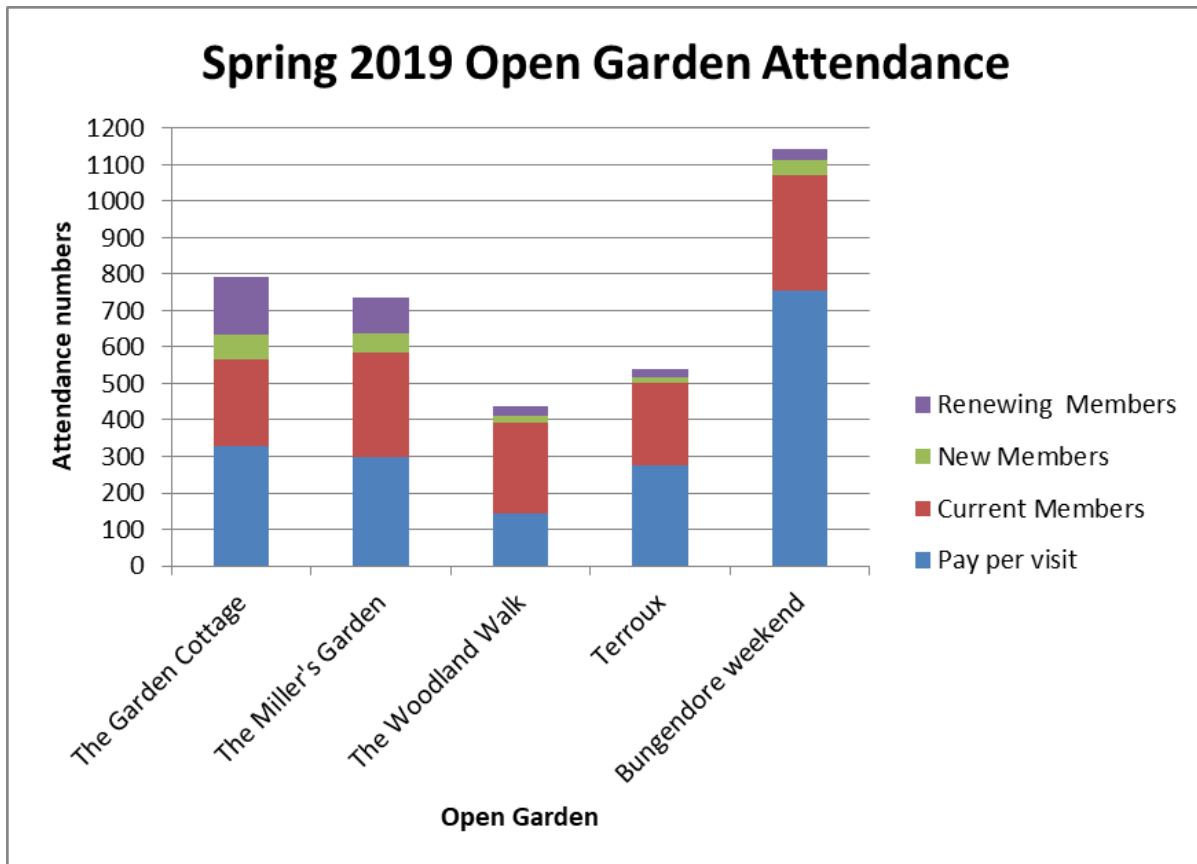
Finally, our membership database is only as good as the information you supply to us so if you change your postal address, phone number or email address please let us know promptly either via info@opengardenscanberra.org.au or complete a Change of Details Form at an open garden.

Payment can be by:

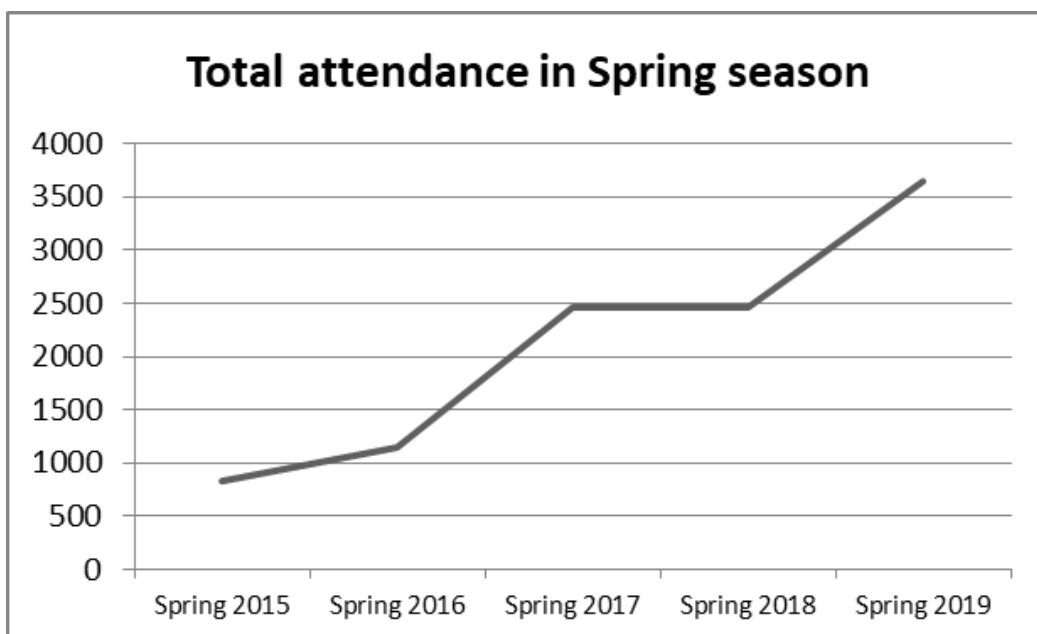
1. Direct deposit: BSB: 633-000 Account number: 155187628
Account Name: Open Gardens Canberra Inc
Reference: Your name
2. Cheque by mail to: Membership Officer, Open Gardens Canberra
PO Box 344, Jamison Centre ACT 2614
3. Cash at an open garden.

Visitor Statistics

For those of you who like some statistics the following graph shows attendance at our open gardens during the Spring 2019 Season. As mentioned in the President's report the Bungendore weekend was very popular with 1143 attendances recorded for the weekend.



We have now been collecting attendance numbers for four years and can demonstrate increasing popularity of our open gardens. The following graph shows the rise in total attendance numbers during the spring seasons from 2015 to 2019.



Tom's Tips

What does Global Warming mean for Gardeners

Like farmers, gardeners are being forced to think about global warming and what this may mean for one of our favourite activities.

The panic is over for the moment, but things are changing. Graphs show clear, persistent increase in sea and air temperatures, sea levels, ocean acidity, melting of global ice, wildfire frequency and erratic weather patterns. All these graphs reflect the relentless increase in greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. More erratic rainfall favours many weeds, pests and diseases and the promise of more water restrictions in the future. Open Gardens Canberra is now experiencing more gardeners having to reluctantly defer opening their gardens to the public.

At the garden bed level, we are having to do more for water conservation by mulching and efficient watering, storing rainwater and more careful plant selection. Succulents and cacti are suddenly popular again. We are paying more attention to human comfort in the form of shading, windbreaks, effective groundcovers, garden design and structures. A persistent problem has been the difficulty of re-wetting desiccated soils. Another interesting trend is seeing plants grow more quickly as long as available nutrients keep pace. We now also need to avoid growing explosively combustible plants near buildings and structures.

We as gardeners are not deterred because gardening appeals to our interests and restores spirits and contributes to our physical and mental health. Many are experimenting with all the above challenges and we are learning from each other by visiting each other's gardens.

Open Gardens Canberra has always promoted sustainability as one of its objectives.

Adaptation is now a common word and urban gardens, parks and reserves are increasingly recognised as providing refuge and habitat for more and more native animal and bird species, as long as we manage our domestic pets. This can only be good for stressed natural systems. Canberra suburban gardens, particularly where there is complex habitat, are a case in point. David Attenborough showed us how Singapore's small rainforest reserves are conserving complete ecosystems.

Where can we get advice, aside from visiting other gardens? Canberra and Queanbeyan's community gardens are a wonderful source of knowledge about creating a healthy, fruitful and resilient garden system. Check out cogs.asn.au, including their seasonal planting guide.

Two excellent references for our region are:

- *The Waterwise Australian Native Garden*, Angus Stewart and AB Bishop; and
- *The Dry Gardening Handbook. Plants and Practices for a Changing Climate*, Olivier Filippi.

Tom Baker