

Summer 2022 Newsletter

Dear <<First Name>>  
Your membership expires on <<Membership Expiration>>

### President's update

#### Our Spring Season

In this newsletter I thought it would be interesting to report on our recent spring open garden season and compare some of the attendance data with previous spring seasons. Open Gardens Canberra has been in operation now since 2015 so we have enough data to reflect some trends.

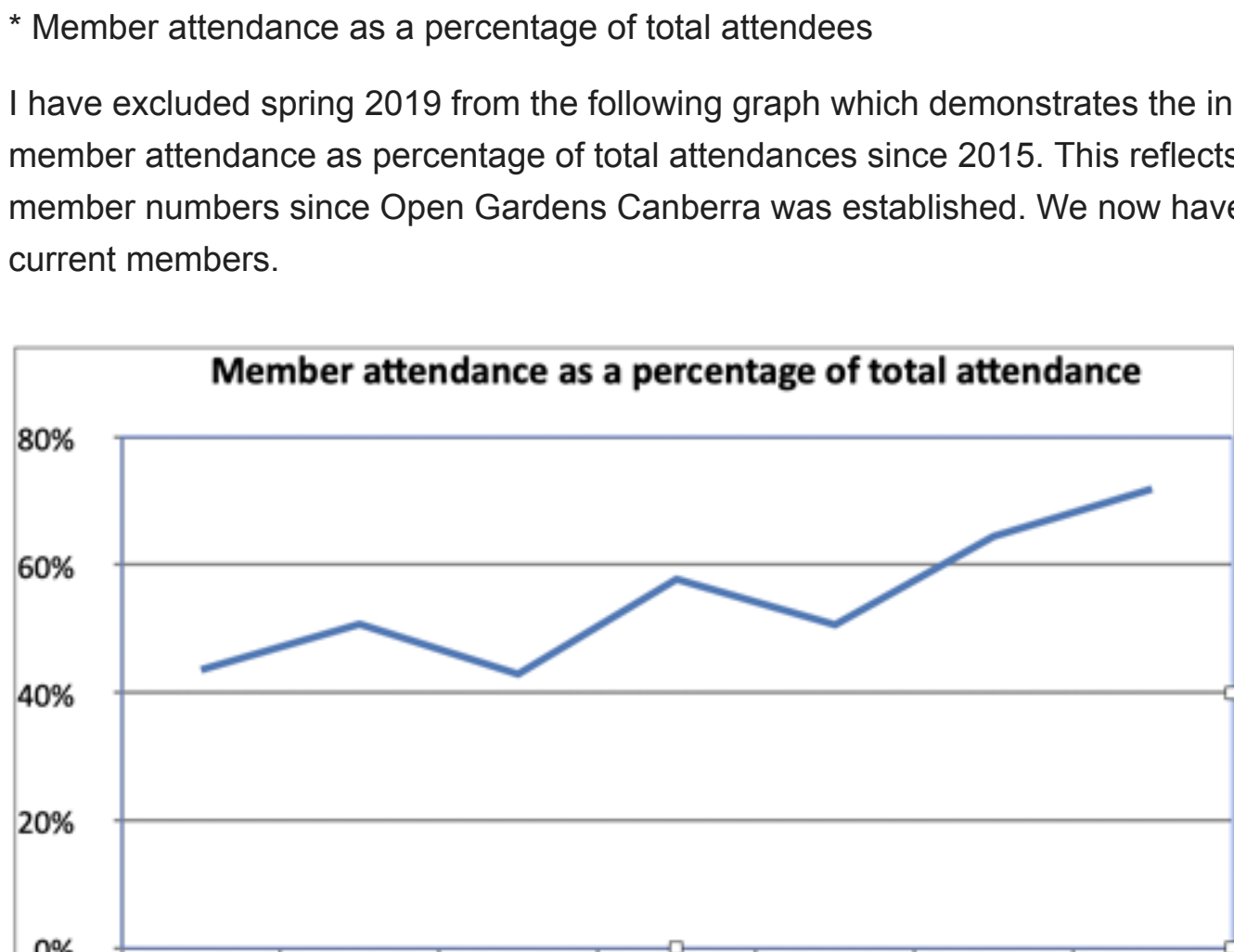
In spring we opened eight gardens and one community garden over five consecutive weekends from 15 October to 12 November 2022. This was an interesting and diverse range of gardens from the heritage gardens of Barton, native woodlands of Jerrabomberra and Campbell, a more formal garden in Evatt, and cottage gardens in Gowie and Red Hill.

The following table shows the outcomes for the season. Of the tickets sold 51% were paid in cash and 49% were purchased through Eventbrite. Total member attendance was 72% of total attendance.

		Cash tickets	Eventbrite	Total tickets	Current Members	Total attendees
Year 8 2022-2023	Date					
Gini's Garden	15-16 Oct 2022	102	69	171	338	509
Vasey Garden	22-23 Oct 2022	26	46	72	230	302
Cook's Garden	22-23 Oct 2022	49	23	72	224	296
Tigminou	29-30 Oct 2022	68	90	158	386	544
Janet's Garden	29-30 Oct 2022	68	90	158	354	512
Christine's Garden	5-6 Nov 2022	59	32	91	308	399
Sarah's Garden	5-6 Nov 2022	55	46	101	312	413
Pillans Garden	11-12 Nov 2022	42	50	92	183	275
<b>Total</b>		<b>469</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>2335</b>	<b>3250</b>

The following graph shows attendance at the gardens and the impact of the wet weather. Tigminou and Janet's Garden, as part of Triple Treat, attracted the most visitors for the season. Gini's Gardens was also very popular with ticket sales being a higher proportion of the total attendance.

The weather over one very wet weekend impacted visitor numbers for Vasey Garden and Cook's Garden. This was also a factor for the lower numbers for Pillans Garden with storms forecast on the Sunday impacting visitor numbers that day.

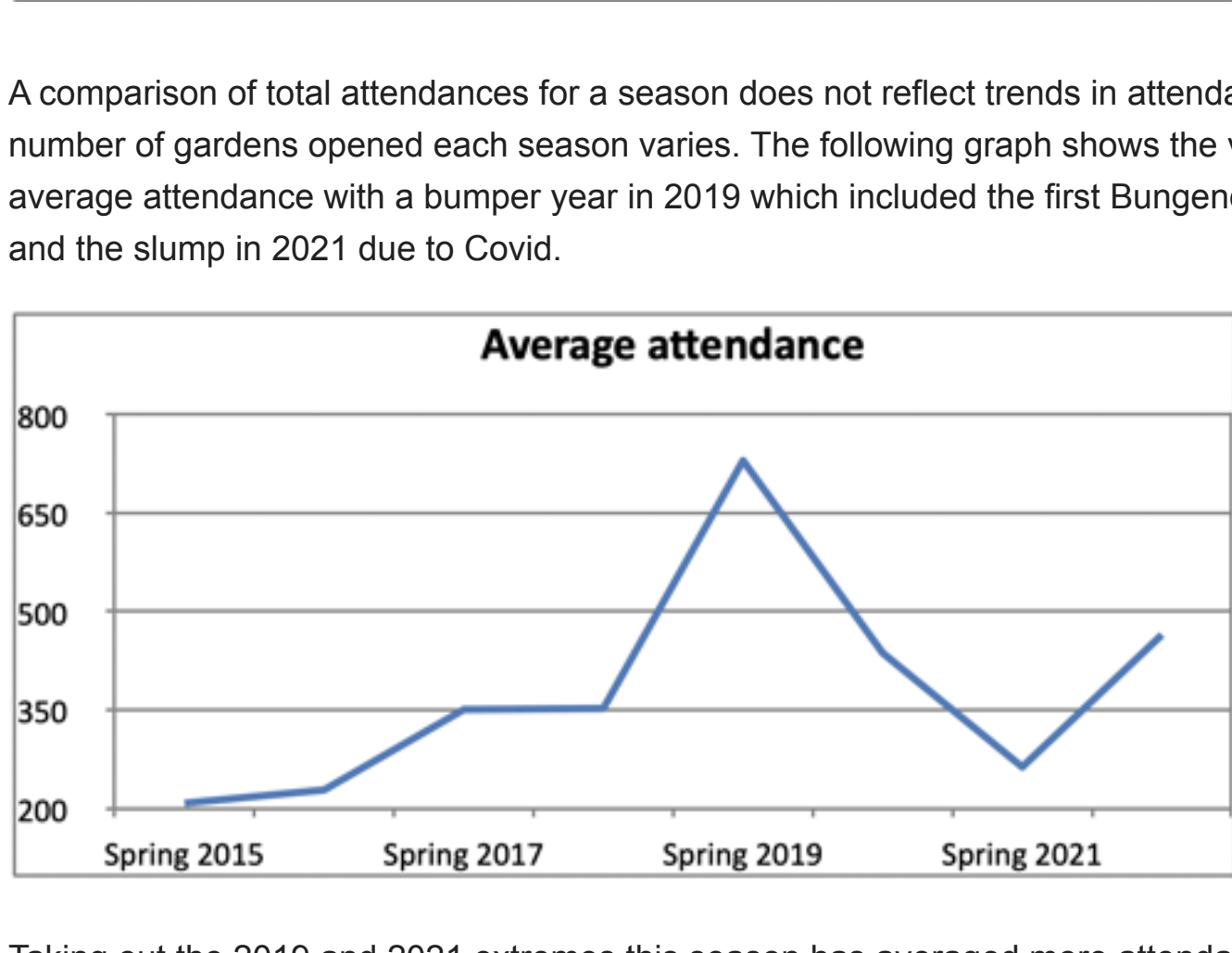


Our recent spring season was the eighth since Open Gardens Canberra was established. The following table shows total attendance figures for each of the spring seasons since 2015. The last column shows members attendance as a percentage of total attendees. To note is that the two gardens opened in spring 2021 were member only events due to Covid restrictions.

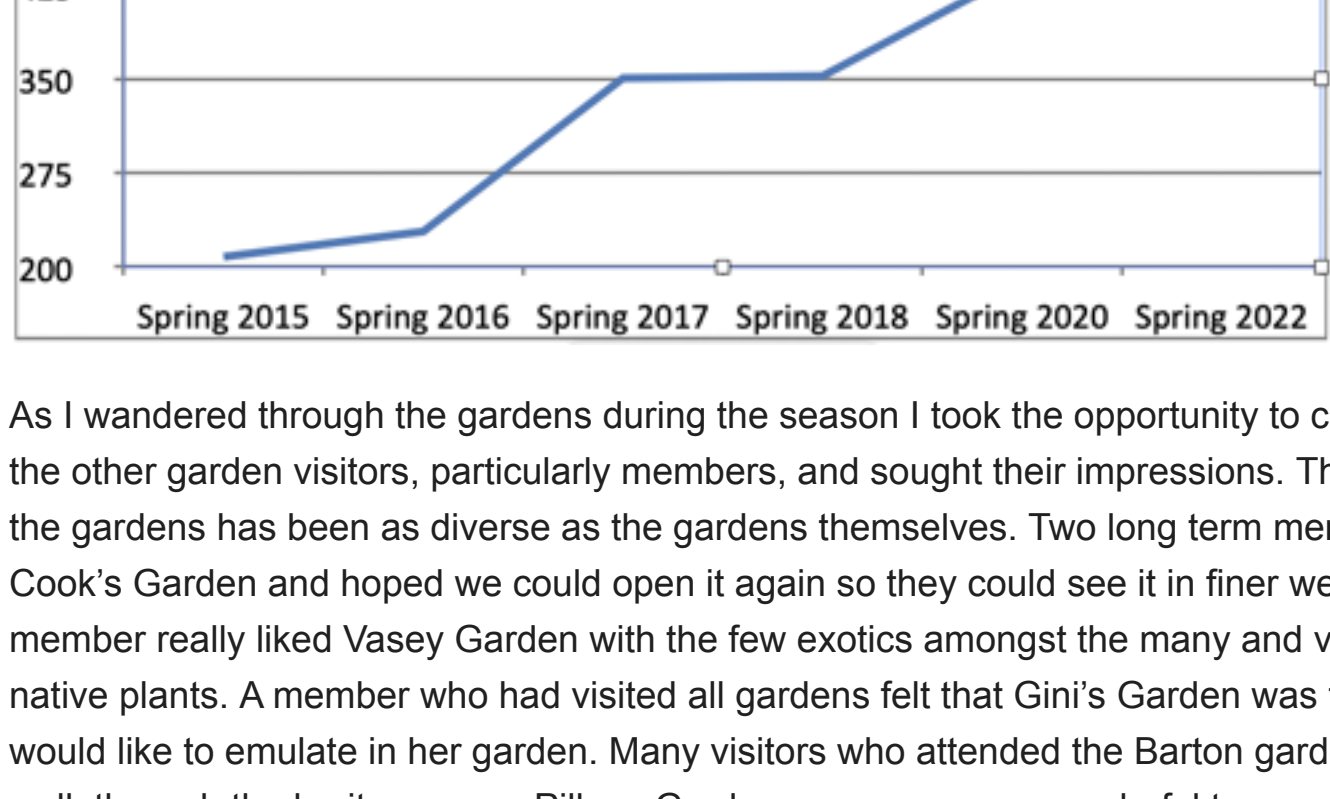
Season	Ticket sales	Members	Total attendees	%
Spring 2015	469	362	831	44%
Spring 2016	562	578	1140	51%
Spring 2017	1401	1052	2453	43%
Spring 2018	1042	1423	2465	58%
Spring 2019	1802	1846	3648	51%
Spring 2020	466	844	1310	64%
Spring 2021	0	526	526	100%
Spring 2022	915	2335	3250	72%

\* Member attendance as a percentage of total attendees

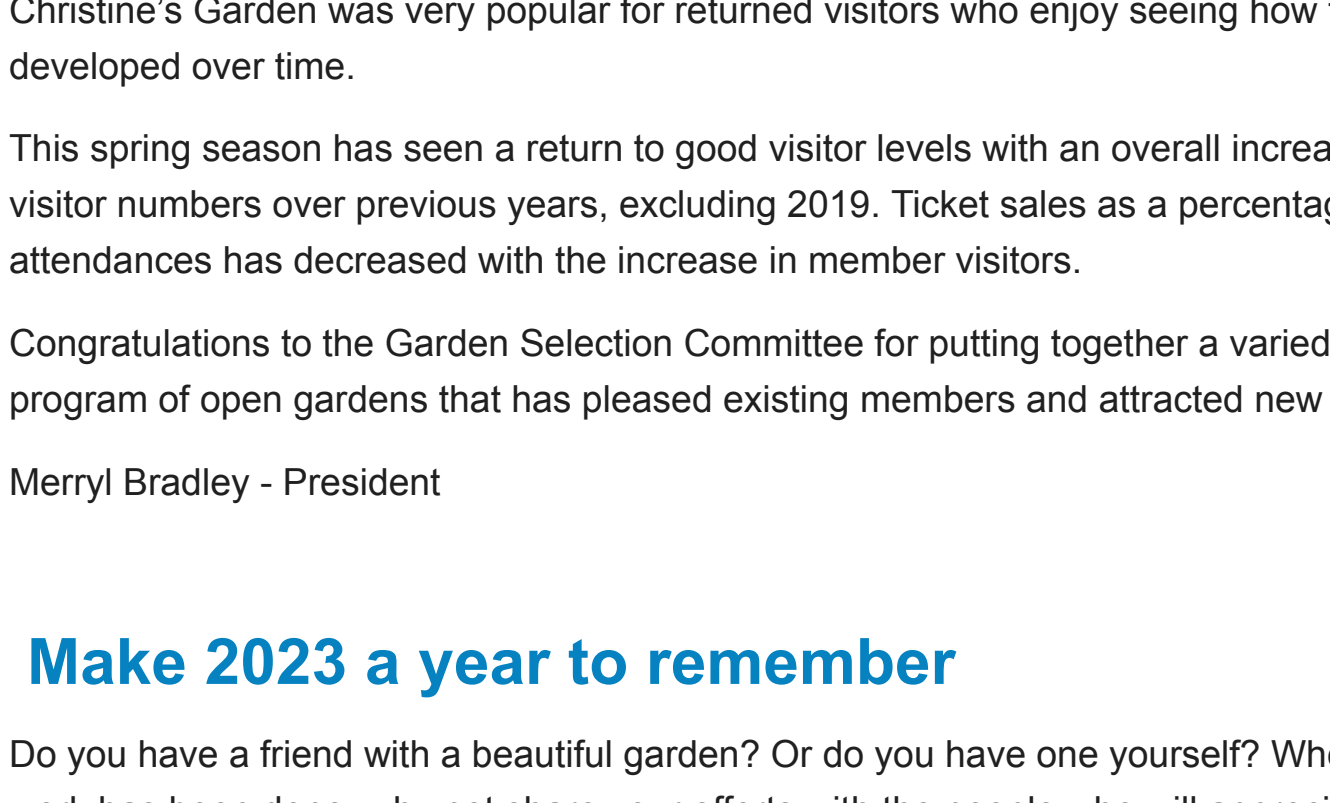
I have excluded spring 2019 from the following graph which demonstrates the increase in member attendance as percentage of total attendees since 2015. This reflects the increase in member numbers since Open Gardens Canberra was established. We now have over 750 current members.



A comparison of total attendances for a season does not reflect trends in attendance as the number of gardens opened each season varies. The following graph shows the variation in average attendance with a bumper year in 2019 which included the first Bundergood weekend and the slump in 2021 due to Covid.



Taking out the 2019 and 2021 extremes this season has averaged more attendances than previous spring seasons as shown in the following graph.



As I wandered through the gardens during the season I took the opportunity to chat to some of the other garden visitors, particularly members, and sought their impressions. Their feedback on the gardens has been as diverse as the gardens themselves. Two long term members loved Cook's Garden and hoped we could open it again so they could see it in finer weather. Another member really liked Vasey Garden with the few exotics amongst the many and varied Australian native plants. A member who had visited all gardens felt that Gini's Garden was the one she would like to emulate in her garden. Many visitors who attended the Barton gardens enjoyed the walk through the heritage area. Pillans Garden was seen as a wonderful treasure trove of Australian natives. Although opened a number of times through Open Gardens Canberra, Christine's Garden was very popular for returned visitors who enjoy seeing how the garden has developed over time.

This spring season has seen a return to good visitor levels with an overall increase in average visitor numbers over previous years, excluding 2019. Ticket sales as a percentage of attendances has decreased with the increase in member visitors.

Congratulations to the Garden Selection Committee for putting together a varied and interesting program of open gardens that has pleased existing members and attracted new members.

Merilyn Bradley - President

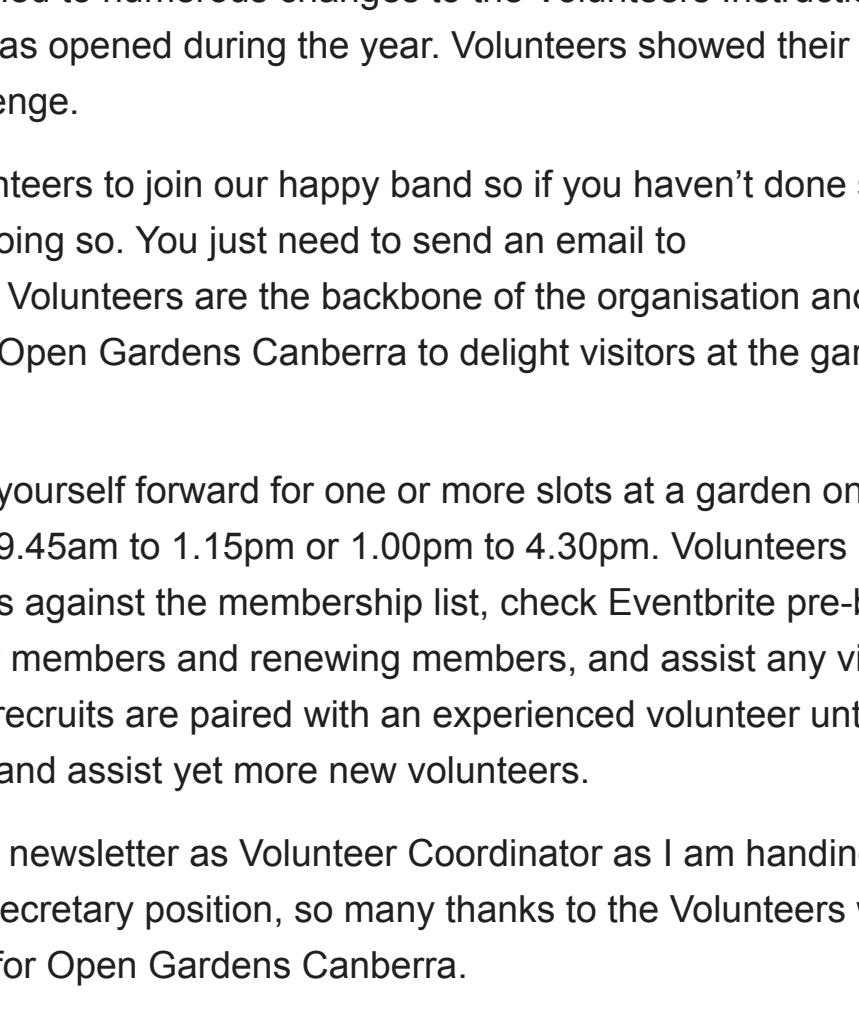
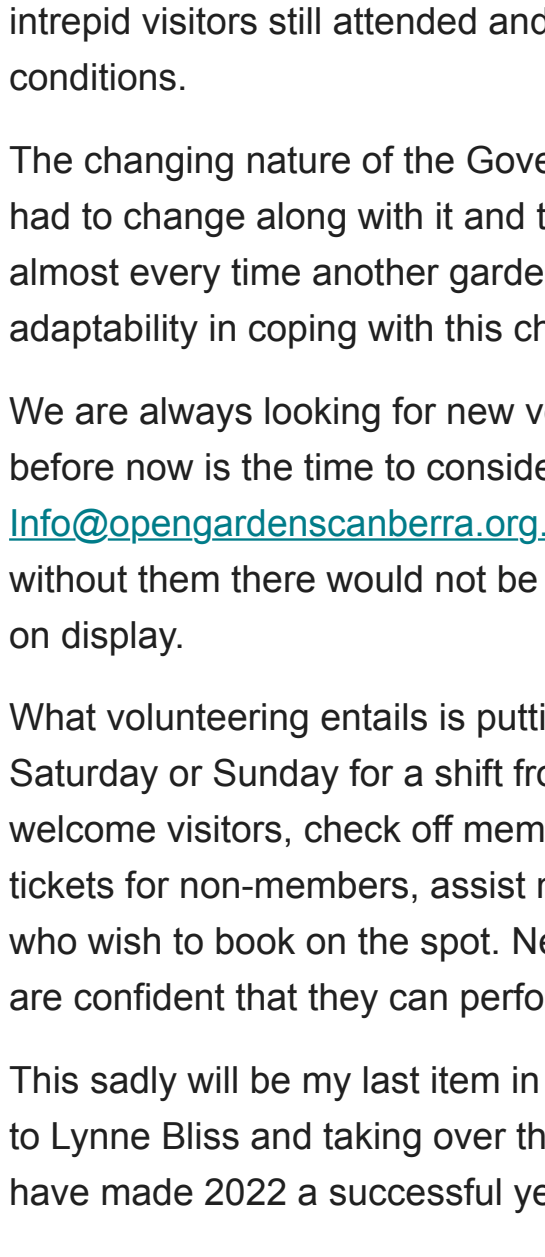
### Make 2023 a year to remember

Do you have a friend with a beautiful garden? Or do you have one yourself? When all the hard work has been done, why not share your efforts with the people who will appreciate it most – Open Gardens Canberra members and fellow garden lovers of the Canberra community? Garden owners often find that their opening is the highlight of their year and a great reward for their efforts.

Opening your garden is made easy with Open Gardens Canberra. There is lots of information and support. Take a look at our Garden Owners Guide on the [website](#). One of our information generators would be thrilled to visit your garden and answer any questions you may have.

We are always interested in finding new gardens, and in particular, are actively seeking additional gardens for our Autumn 2023 program. Send us an email at [info@opengardenscanberra.org.au](mailto:info@opengardenscanberra.org.au) and we can start the conversation.

Some highlights from previous years' open gardens:



Joan's Garden

Davenport Garden

Deirdre Giergaard - and other garden selectors

### Volunteering with Open Gardens

2022 has been a successful year for Open Gardens Canberra with 14 gardens being opened in the Autumn and Spring Seasons. This meant I had quite a challenging task to find Volunteers to fill 104 slots on the entrance desk and juggle volunteers around to suit their particular availabilities. Luckily volunteers responded enthusiastically, which made my job that much easier.

The weather was a major influence on attendance numbers on particularly rainy days but intrepid visitors still attended and there was not one forced closure due to adverse weather conditions.

The changing nature of the Government's Covid response has meant that our procedures have had to change along with it and this led to numerous changes to the Volunteers Instructions almost every time another garden was opened during the year. Volunteers showed their adaptability in coping with this challenge.

We are always looking for new volunteers to join our happy band so if you haven't done so before now is the time to consider doing so. You just need to send an email to [info@opengardenscanberra.org.au](mailto:info@opengardenscanberra.org.au). Volunteers are the backbone of the organisation and without them there would not be an Open Gardens Canberra to delight visitors at the gardens on display.

What volunteering entails is putting yourself forward for one or more slots at a garden on a Saturday or Sunday for a shift from 9.45am to 1.15pm or 1.00pm to 4.30pm. Volunteers welcome visitors, check off members against the membership list, check Eventbrite pre-booked tickets for non-members, assist new members and renewing members, and assist any visitors who wish to book on the spot. New recruits are paired with an experienced volunteer until they are confident that they can perform and assist as yet more new volunteers.

This sadly will be my last item in the newsletter as Volunteer Coordinator as I am handing over to Lynne Bliss and taking over the Secretary position, so many thanks to the Volunteers who have made 2022 a successful year for Open Gardens Canberra.

Lynne will be contacting you closer to the Autumn 2023 Season with a request to volunteer.

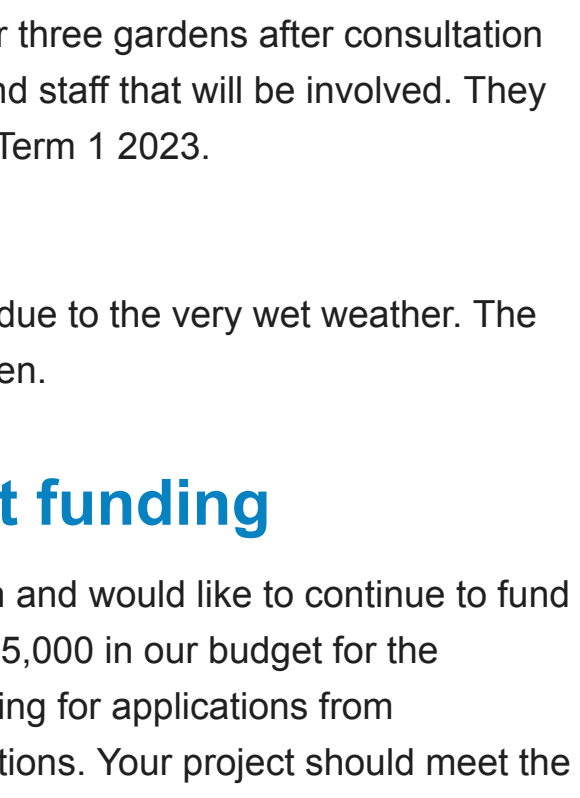
Martin Wright - Volunteer Coordinator (2022)

### Project Reports

We funded three projects in July of this year. The funding recipients have provided the following progress reports.

#### St Dominic's Garden, Holy Rosary Church

Stage 1 of the garden was completed on 22 October 2022 with the planting of over 100 Tulbaghia violacea 'John May Special' (a taller growing form of Society Garlic) in a previously bare area between the Parish Centre and carpark. The Society Garlic will provide a soft front border and point of contrast to larger agapanthus, roses and citrus, which were planted towards the back of the garden bed in late Winter. All plants are doing well and expected to establish quickly with a wet Spring and Summer predicted.



Stage 2 of the garden, which will involve clearing and planting an adjacent area to the west of the Parish Centre, will commence in Summer and run through until Autumn 2023.

#### Canberra High School

Canberra High School are still in the planning stages for their three gardens after consultation between teachers, particularly Food Technology teachers, and staff that will be involved. They expect to start purchasing materials for the gardens early in Term 1 2023.

#### Bonner Verge Garden

Construction of the Bonner Verge garden has been delayed due to the very wet weather. The owners have used the delay to refine their plans for the garden.

### 3Calls for applications for project funding

Open Gardens Canberra remains in a good financial position and would like to continue to fund some projects that meet our core values. We have allowed \$5,000 in our budget for the remainder of this financial year for such projects and are calling for applications from individuals, community groups or small incorporated associations. Your project should meet the criteria on the [application form](#). Please submit your application to [president1@opengardenscanberra.org.au](mailto:president1@opengardenscanberra.org.au) by 28 February 2023. We will assess the applications and enter into an agreement with the successful applicant(s) with a view to the funds being paid by 30 June 2023.

Types of projects that could be considered include but are not limited to:

- Projects that will enhance a streetscape
- Projects that will improve the garden experience for the disabled
- Garden education projects
- Making open gardens available to a wider audience through technology.

### Horticultural scholarship 2023

With the assistance of Julie Collins (CIT Head of Dept of Horticulture and Floristry) we have selected Katherine Harrison as our Scholarship recipient for 2023. Katherine has over 20 years of experience in construction project management and commenced studying for the Horticulture Certificate in 2022 successfully completing the first semester subjects and currently doing three subjects in the second semester.

Katherine is considering a career change into Horticulture, recently assisting at a Truffle Farm. She has also indicated that she is willing to use her experience in construction project management to assist people opening their gardens.

We welcome her as a worthy recipient of our Horticulture Scholarship for 2023/24.

Chris Lord - Scholarship Coordinator

### Membership and Privacy

We at Open Gardens Canberra want to minimise possible potential exposure of members' details. Accordingly we will only retain contact information for our members whilst they remain current or have not renewed in the previous year. Accordingly we have deleted all information we held for members whose membership had expired before 1 September 2024 from our on-line membership system. Any members whose membership had expired before that date can, of course, join again.

When you join or renew your membership through Jointit and pay by credit card we **do not** retain your credit card details. Jointit has a facility to keep credit card information to automatically renew for subsequent years. We **do not** use this facility.

### Unsubscribing

This newsletter goes to Open Gardens Canberra members, ex-members and those people who have subscribed to the newsletter. If you no longer want to receive the newsletter please unsubscribe so we can remove you from our mailing list.

You will find the link to unsubscribe [here](#), and at the bottom of the footer of this email.

### Tom's Tips:

#### Asparagus, one of the Jekylls and Hydes among veges

One suggestion I received from the OGC Committee was that I write about asparagus, the tasty, nutritious, low carb, reliable and versatile perennial plant, easy to grow from seed (3 years) or quicker with crowns. There are other cited health benefits, including a source of protein, fibre and anti-oxidants preventing osteoporosis, and even good for hangovers. However, some people find asparagus can cause a distinctive smell to urine.

Asparagus has few pests and grows well in garden soil, benefitting from compost, some NPK and lime once every few years. Harvest from mid spring to start of summer and then allow foliage to mature and die. New plants can be obtained every 10 years or so as plants lose their vigour. Even frozen asparagus retains its taste and nutrition. Asparagus can even be eaten raw.

All this and more can be obtained from the Internet, including lots of great recipes and storage. I like asparagus quickly cooked and smeared on toast with pepper.

I wanted to talk about the other side of asparagus. Asparagus can spread from seed and spring up and thrive even in long grass. My now deceased mother-in-law had a vigorous patch establish itself in her lawn, which is on poor sandy soil. Yet every year it became more and more productive with large thick spears. Being a forager, I became curious to examine clumps growing along the Upper Molonglo River. Lo and behold, ridiculously large and tender spears appear each year among the riparian vegetation, and the occasional snake, growing out of sand and gravel, presumably with silt lower down. We have had 18 flood crests over the last nearly 3 years on the upper Molonglo and even when inundated, the spears continued to grow. So you can mollycoddle this plant and it starts to pine away but let it loose in nature and it thrives.

That reminded me of the Open Gardens Canberra season when Cuppacumbalong, near Tharwa on the Murrumbidgee River, opened to the public in Spring 2018. If you had been on the walk up the river to the small cemetery, you might have noticed numerous clumps of asparagus on the river flood terraces. I remember seeing the same on the Jemalong Weir on the Lachlan River, together with a large variety of fruit trees and berried self seeded on the flood plains.

That reminds me not to miss out on the brown figs, apples, blackberries, plums and pears growing in obscure places this summer, and the felijsas in winter. And of course mustard, mitsuna, perennial spinaches, mint, borage, dill, rocket, fennel and others have all jumped the fence and are now bolting happily.


Tom Baker - garden selector and tips generator

### Friends of the National Arboretum Canberra (FNAC)

#### Wollemi Pine Trees available.

The second release of Wollemi Pines from the Friends' Wollemi Propagation Project is now available for sale. The trees are just over two and a half years old; they have been grown locally and are only for sale on the Friends' website: <https://friendsarbortunccanberra.org.au/>.

Each Wollemi can be traced back to seed taken from a specific Wollemi in Forest 32 at the National Arboretum, Canberra. Proceeds from the sale of these trees will go towards supporting future Arboretum projects.



Wollemi Pine tree stock

### MailChimp

You will notice that we use MailChimp to distribute emails to members. Using MailChimp ensures that Open Gardens Canberra is treated nicely in the internet world. Without it, our emails would be treated as spam simply because we send emails to a lot of people – more than 1000 members. To continue to receive member notifications, please don't unsubscribe from our MailChimp list.

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