Autumn 2026

President's Update

Welcome to our autumn 2026 newsletter, which follows a really testing time of heat, wind and smoke. We hope that you and your gardens have survived the heat and that the rain finally has arrived.

Well, Canberra region garden lovers certainly coped with that fake-it Spring 2026! Our big program of 10 diverse gardens attracted almost record numbers and and the 3 workshops were all or our volunteers for a truly amazing start.

Our **Grants Program** has been very successful, with **Grow Together: Community garden open day** and three open gardens, kicking off with a really inspirational large country garden with sweeping views **Lone Hope** just outside of Tarcutta on 22 March. Then we had a very diverse garden in Chifley, **Chifley Community Garden** on 28 March. Also 10 in the area showing our Open Gardens Grants in Kambah Area, and in the Belconnen (only) theme) the nearby New Farm is still in the fun!

Now to round out our autumn offerings, be sure to visit **The Living Block** in Casuarina on 28-29 March and be inspired by how this young family has transformed a large block, into a productive and beautiful garden. Then on April 11 we have a very special one, **Christine's Garden** in Giralia on 11-12 April. This garden is a great favorite, opening in autumn for the first time since 2019 - the garden is full of ideas and there'll be lots of plants for sale.

Our grants are now open! Find out about how we are helping organisations and how you can become a reality.

With that great spring heat under our belt, our Committee was proud to be able to award not one but two Horticulture Scholarships this year, to Mira Dasiak and Ross Sweeting, both members in these outstanding curriculums. Find out more about them in this newsletter.

As it time for you to open your garden or do you know of a great garden in the Canberra region, please contact us at opengardenscanberra@gmail.com. We welcome new expressions of interest, as we are now **ALL** Volunteer Organisation, and we'll take those from Pam

Let's Dusting

President

Open Gardens Autumn Season

The following gardens are all open **10am - 5pm**. Gardens vary in fees to members. **Entry is $10** for adults. 16 years and over. Cash or EFTPOS.

21 - 22 March, 2026

New Hope
4 Manor Drive Hall, 2618 ACT

This Chifley 50 year old property with sweeping view gardens, mature trees, a great pond, been transformed into an extensive and richly layered country garden. Hedges, archway, gazebos, pergolas, and a variety of seating areas invite you to explore the garden and enjoy its many favorite items, cottage/ornamental, a grand entry flanked by tall Kanaroo, ancient gum trees, fruit, nut and berry orchards, cutflower and vegetable beds, and an extensive orchard. The property is fenced and suitable for pets. Plenty to enjoy! A cuppa and a slice of cake with the planting to the country - and if you like, bring a picnic to meet a day of relief, a cake to nearby Tuggeranong.
Read more

28 - 29 March, 2026

The Living Block
40 Cowlishaw Street Cultivated, ACT 2615

Step into a vibrant, productive garden where textures, and bubbles grow side by side. Set on a large Cultivated block, this thriving space blends cottage garden charm with abundant edible planting. Wander through a landscape alive with wildlife, explore the thriving vegetable beds, and discover how beauty and abundance can grow together in harmony.

Fruit trees and vines add to the expansive orchard of more than 25 full trees, alongside a greenhouse and a richly planted berry collection, a flourishing herb garden and productive veggie patch. Friendly chickens completes this backyard ecosystem.
Read more

11 - 12 April, 2026

Christine's Garden
45 Giralia Street, Scullin, ACT 2614

A great favourite returns for its 3rd autumn opening since 2019! Enjoy this very large suburban block with a wide variety of plants, including a large vegetable garden, a large orchard, lawns with ornamental and edibles. English box hedges divide some of the vegetable gardens. Large mirrors on the boundary fences create illusions of depth. Deciduous trees provide Autumn colour. Refreshments will be available, and there will be plenty of plants for sale.
Read more

Grow Together: Open Gardens Canberra grants now open

We're offering grants of up to $5,000 for creative, community-driven gardening projects.

Do you have an idea for a neighbourhood garden, a collaborative planting initiative, or a community-focused garden together through gardening? This is your chance to make it happen!

We're looking for projects that not only showcase gardening but also engage and connect people, strengthen local food systems, support biodiversity, or build accessible, inclusive spaces in a sustainable green space, we're hoping to support.

These grants are open to individuals, community groups and not-for-profit organisations in the Canberra/Queanbeyan region who are passionate about fostering community connection through gardening.

Grants are open now and closing on Sunday 31st May. Visit Open Gardens Canberra - Grants Program **to learn more and download your application. Applications close Thursday 30th April 2026.**

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

Sustainable gardening projects

- Restoration of native ecosystems
- Projects that will enhance a streetscape
- Projects that will improve the experience for people with disability
- Garden education projects
- Making open gardens available to a wider audience through technology

Let's cultivate creativity and connection with Open Gardens Canberra!

Grant recipients 2025

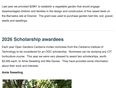
Community garden at St Vincent's FS

Thanks to the great we received last year, the St Vincent's Supportunity Shed has been transformed into a vibrant community space. The grant funded the building and IT equipment - including chairs, tables and an AV and projector - making it easier for students to participate in hands-on gardening and work. Our garden beds were tipped up and refilled with fresh soil, ready for students to plant and care for.

We also expanded our gardening, adding brilliant sunflowers, potatoes and a variety of herbs, all of which have been growing beautifully. One of the biggest developments has been our composting initiative. With two new worm farms and two roller compost bins, students have learned how to turn kitchen scraps into nutrient-rich soil. Friday Making as made custom 'soil' compost for our garden.

Last year, students came together to water, prune, harvest and care for the garden. Learning not only practical skills but also how to source seeds and care for the environment. This initiative has delivered many enthusiastic delight and has helped raise awareness about sustainability across the school community.

Canberra High School bush food garden



We were pleased to provide a grant of $1,100 to Canberra High School last year for the purpose of establishing an Australian bush food garden at the school. The garden is intended to create an innovative and immersive educational resource for students and staff to explore Australian bush food plants, their cultivation, their cultural significance and their ecology. The grant was used to purchase soil, compost, mulch, sustainable pallicers, irrigation systems and indigenous bush food seeds and plants. The photo above shows a member of the Colours Heights Team hard at work in the garden in February.

The Bernedale Canberra Children Family Centre community garden

Last year we provided $500 to establish a vegetable garden that would engage disadvantaged children and families in the design and construction of a free raised beds or vegetable and herb gardens. The grant was used to purchase garden mix/ soil, grub seeds and seedlings.

2026 Scholarship awardees

Each year, Open Gardens Australia Horticulture Scholarships are from the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) Horticulture course. The Open Gardens Scholarships are for studying your CIT horticulture course. This year we were very pleased to award two scholarships, worth $2,000 each, to Mira Dasiaking and Mira Dasiak. They have provided some information about their work and interests.

Mira Dasiaking

Mira Dasiak

Hello!

My name is Mira. I am 21 and I currently work at the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG), where I have been working for the past two years. My career aspiration is to establish a Botanical Garden in my hometown of Bendigo in a week. They had a casual conversation with a colleague who then let me know that I should contact the Institute of Technology (CIT) and I did.

Now a full time staff member, I've spent most of that time hard working in the Tasmanian rainforest gully and Tasmanian garden and therefore have developed a great deal of knowledge on Tasmanian plants! I adore working outdoors and looking after such an ancient and unique flora. I have also been working in the Australian Native Plant section, which was being done by the creative and artistic all the same time is incredible! My work ranges a lot. I'm often monitoring, pruning, planting, watering (especially in summer) and weeding. I have also got to help propagate plants, repot through pots(!) to the front and plant out!

I finished my certificate II in Horticulture last year in December and I loved every moment of it. CIT is an incredible school and I highly recommend it to anyone who is interested in it and it! It is a result this year I have started my certificate III in Horticulture. I was nervous to start it because I felt I had learned so much in the Certificate II course and I was afraid I'd be a strong passion for everything to do with trees. I'm very excited to be able to study Horticulture this year and plan on pursuing it more in the future.

My biggest goal in life is for my future to work as an ethnobotanical educator in Kaya Park in Western Australia. I'm very grateful to have received the scholarship from Open Gardens Canberra. It has given me a big boost in self-confidence and motivation to continue on the path for me.

Volunteers News

A huge thank you to all who have volunteered to help at each of our open gardens this season, and a very warm welcome to our new Volunteers.

It is only with the help of Volunteers that Open Gardens Canberra is able to offer a number of world gardens each season. As you can imagine, many volunteers are needed each season in order to place at least two volunteers in every Reception Desk, at each garden.

Please consider volunteering, if you have any hours free on Sundays, have a chat with one of our friendly volunteers at the Reception Desk at any gardens you visit.

Volunteering with Open Gardens Canberra is an opportunity to meet new people and to make new friends who also have an interest in beautiful gardens and gardening, while learning new skills.

The tasks involved in working at an Open Gardens Reception Desk are really learn and enjoyable. Volunteers are the first point of contact for visitors/ garden owners and the Volunteers Coordinator.

You choose when and at which gardens at which you would like to volunteer, and you can make you up with a friend if you would like to. They are covered by our voluntary worker insurance while travelling to and from and while you are working at an Open Garden.

If you would like to be volunteering with Open Gardens Canberra, or have any questions about volunteering with ONC, please send us an email to opengardenscanberra@gmail.com and we'll get back to you soon!

COGS - Canberra Organic Growers Society

PO Box 147 Dickson ACT 2602 Australia. E-mail: president@cogs.asn.au.
President: 0412 345 678

CANBERRA ORGANIC GROWERS SOCIETY RELEASES a NEW GROWING GUIDES

The Canberra Organic Growers' Society (COGS) is excited to release 30 new growing guides that attached for use by its members and the Canberra community on the COGS website.

The Guides are designed to help Canberra's grow continue food and cover a wide range of vegetables from Beans to Zucchini as well as herbs and strawberries. The Guides are based on COGS by Chris Bunting from the Kinder Urban Farm, Earth Guide Group.

- Indigenous plant use
- Planting calendar (a social reference guide as to the best time to plant)
- Cultivation and harvesting
- Companionshipping (a combined that grow well in Canberra's conditions
- Pest and disease management (a guide to organic pest and disease control methods)
- References for those that want to find out more information

In addition, there is a new Bee/ Pollination Guide to help gardeners get started.

Given the quality of the new Guides, COGS has commissioned further work on the existing guides on our website to bring them up to the same standard, as well as some new ones.

The Guides are based on the Canberra Organic Growers Society's Growing Guide, represent one of the most comprehensive set of up-to-date guides to growing organic food and vegetables in the Canberra Region." The Guides link to our popular planting calendar which is a quick reference guide for when to plant your seeds or seedlings.

Background information on COGS

Canberra Organic Growers Society (COGS) is a non-profit organisation started in 1977. One of its aims is to promote information on community gardening and demonstrate organic growing techniques for COGS members and the wider public. COGS operates 12 community gardens.

List of New Growing Guides on COGS Website

1. Bean Growing
2. Asparagus
3. Blueberries
4. Cabbage
5. Capsicum
6. Cauliflower
7. Celeriac
8. Chinese and Radicchio(Chicory) Radishes
9. Cress
10. Chinese Cabbage
11. Corn Salad
12. Cucumbers
13. Eggplant
14. Endive
15. French Beans
16. Japanese Turnips
17. Jerusalem Artichokes
18. Kohl Rabi
19. Melons
20. Chives
21. Onions
22. Parsnips
23. Peas and Snow Peas and Snap Peas
24. Squash (Pumpkin)
25. Sweet Chard (Silver beet)
26. Tomatoes
27. Zucchini

Do you have any photos of your garden?

We are constantly looking for garden photos for this newsletter and our social media. If you have a great photo of your garden, please send it through to us at opengardenscanberra@gmail.com. All photos sent will be credited with photographer and garden owner.

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