



# Winter Newsletter 2021



*Camellia Japonica.*

Following a rather dry Autumn, Winter has arrived! Much welcomed rain has refreshed our gardens and is now replenishing the sub-soil moisture levels. It's the season for pruning roses and fruit trees. The days may be shorter, but there is no shortage of garden tasks to do! It's also a great opportunity to relax with a good book (or plant catalogue) and plan future garden projects on the days when it's too wet or cold to spend outside. The OGSA Committee is busy preparing for our Spring season and we look forward to bringing you an exciting program with our first garden opening in late August. We hope you enjoy our Winter Newsletter.... keep warm and happy reading!

## *Inside this Issue:*

- Open Gardens SA 2020-2021 Season Overview
- *Gardens of Promise* by Trevor Nottle
- Book Review - THE GENUS ECHEVERIA
- Open Gardens SA Annual General Meeting
- OGSA Season commences on 21 & 22 August 2021 – Metzger Garden in Stirling
- Winter and early Spring program of Open Gardens
- SA Landscape Festival – A Great Weekend!
- Floral Emblem of South Australia - Sturt's Desert Pea

Winter and Early  
Spring Open Gardens  
A full list will be  
available on our  
Website

August 21 - 22  
Metzger Garden, Stirling

September 04 - 05  
Avondale, Rhyne

September 11 - 12  
Rosie and Mick's Garden,  
Stirling

September 19 SUNDAY ONLY  
Al-Ru Farm, One Tree Hill

September 25 - 26  
The Working Persons Garden,  
Burnside

September 26 SUNDAY  
ONLY  
Marybank Farm, Rostrevor

**See the full program on our  
webpage from early August:**  
<http://opengardensa.org.au>



## Open Gardens SA 2020-2021 Season Overview

What a roller-coaster season we've had!

We hope you've enjoyed visiting gardens in our first full season with Covid. Due to conflicting advice, we were unable to open some gardens at the start of the season, but got underway in October. Since then we have shared more than 40 gardens, including 12 in the inaugural SA Landscape Festival.

*Thank-you to our generous garden owners.*

We greatly appreciate the garden owners who generously shared their gardens with more than 14,000 visitors. We had such a variety this season, from gardens focusing on productivity, to a bunch of friendly gardens at Henley, to grand gardens that evoke classical estates.

*Your visits help many charities.*

Many garden owners choose to use their opens to support their favorite charity. This season, your visits helped our garden owners to donate more than \$62,000 to about 25 charities - bringing the total raised for charities since Open Gardens SA was established in 2015 to almost \$800,000.

*The first SA Landscape Festival.*

Twelve wonderful, professionally designed gardens were showcased in the inaugural SA Landscape Festival, in a joint venture between Master Landscapers of SA and Open Gardens SA.

The gardens inspired more than 7000 visitations over one weekend and raised about \$22,000 for the hard-working SA Country Women's Association.

*Theatre in the garden.*

In what has become a much-loved tradition, Blue Sky Theatre and Open Gardens SA were able to stage a new play - within Covid guidelines - that not only brought much-needed light relief, but also raised about \$11,000 for several charities.

*Community grants.*

In a commitment to support the community, Open Gardens SA donated \$10,000 to BlazeAid to begin much-needed repairs after the terrible 2020 summer bushfires, as well as \$9,000 in grants to community gardens.

*Spring 2021.*

And now we look forward to spring with many gardens already in the program. Our first garden - a ferny haven - will open in Stirling in late August.

On behalf of the Open Gardens SA team, thank-you for visiting our gardens, stay safe, and we look forward to welcoming you back in spring.

**David Hancock**

Chair, Open Gardens SA.

### Open Gardens SA Seasonal Program

The full listing of our open gardens with all details and beautiful photographs will be available on our website:

<http://opengardensa.org.au/>

*Our aim is to promote the enjoyment, knowledge, and benefits of gardens and gardening in the South Australian community, and to build strong public support for the development of gardens across the state.*

#### ***Selection of photos from our Summer / Autumn Program:***



*Turtle Rock Garden, Victor Harbor, 02-03 January 2021.*



*The Cascade Water Garden, Crafers, 06-07 February 2021*



*Tipsy Hill, McLaren Vale /Blewitt Springs 20-21 March*



*The Laurels, Crafers, 17-18 April 2021.*

## GARDENS OF PROMISE

By Trevor Nottle

Sunday afternoon, 16 May 2021, I had the honour of speaking at a History Month exhibition brought together by the Hellenic Women's Association of SA which is a cultural association established to maintain Greek culture in the migrant community.



*Photo L to R – Sophie Thomson, Trevor Nottle, Joanna Tsalikis.*

The ladies on the committee had organised a terrific survey among very old Greeks, and two Italians, concerning their connections to their gardens. Having interviewed and recorded all of them, the ladies proceeded to photograph both the gardens and their makers. The information was displayed for the exhibition in the North Adelaide Community Hall on wall-mounted story-boards backed up with a video on loop showing some of the gardeners talking about their gardens in their gardens. It was a brilliant show; one that should be expanded and shown again for an extended period; maybe that can happen at the Glendi Festival in November.

I made a few notes before I spoke. Here's what I noted:  
"Tending my garden provides me with a form of meditation. I live in the moment in that place." George Markopolis.  
"My garden is my refuge, my 'asilo'." George Kaldis.  
"My garden gives me life, strength." George Adranopotos.  
"My garden is my life; without it I would die." Toula Stevens.

As you can see the exhibition was more about what their gardens mean to their makers than the plants they grow, and about how their gardens support their way they conduct their lives through traditions of hospitality, feeding strangers, being in the community, supporting their families and observing their religion and customs; that is their 'philosimo'.

I felt that all of us, being derived from migrants to Australia how far soever back, could have learned and shared feelings in common with the people represented. We can all learn from each other in what we grow, what we use gardens for, how we value them as crucial parts to a good life and how we are connected as a community.

We are all here though we have come from some 'other' place at some time. We are planning to stay here; we are not going back and the act of gardening demonstrates that we are establishing ourselves in this new place and building a sense of place for ourselves here.

We may have carried our cultural traditions here with us from that 'other place' but we have adapted them too, and adopted the traditions of others that make more sense here. Common sense prevails following shared experiences. We can learn to read the weather here; we can define the seasons here; we can tell the soil by touch and sight; we are learning to grow plants that are compatible with this place.

We know that gardening is not a series of hard chores and boring tasks; we know gardening is more than an opportunity to show off or sell products; we know growing plants is not one problem after another. We know all this about being here and growing here because it gives us joy.

Thanks to Joanna Tsalikis for the images and the invitation. My apologies if my crabbed hand-writing has made any errors in the spelling of names.

I hope that we can all grow in ourselves to become more connected with the whole of our community from those who first stepped ashore in 1836 to those who arrived for the first time just last month.

**Trevor Nottle**



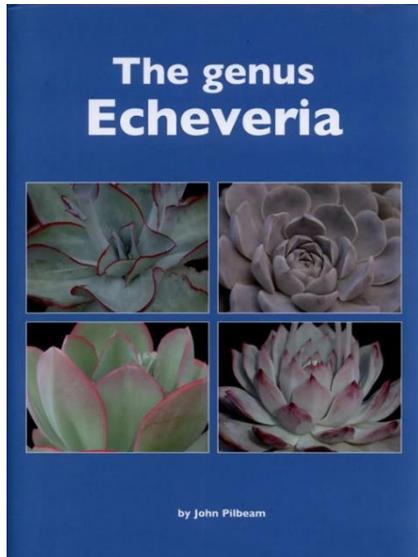
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and Instagram*



## Book Review - THE GENUS ECHEVERIA

John Pilbeam, BCSS (Hornchurch, Essex, UK), 2008.

By Trevor Nottle



Following on my recent piece about growing Echeverias in SA Gardens I was very pleased to obtain a new book on the genus published by the British Cactus and Succulent Society. The author, John Pilbeam, is a world recognised authority on the genus and its allies, and also a very skilled grower of the plants which make his botanical and cultural observations of considerable value to specialist collectors and gardeners alike.

The genera hasn't been given a thorough revision for many years during which time many new species have been discovered, described and introduced to cultivation so the book is very timely given the upswing in popularity I wrote about previously. New plants have been found in the more remote parts of Mexico as a result of increased activity by local and other plant hunters. Some have been found growing in dangerous to explore rocky screes in the mountains, and high up on cliff faces. In both localities drainage is instant and 100% and the plants thrive just on the small quantity of leaf mould that slowly accumulates about the clumps of leaf rosettes. One new variety, at least, has been found by plant hunters landing on top of an otherwise accessible mesa by helicopter. Such is the determination of intrepid botanists and collectors.

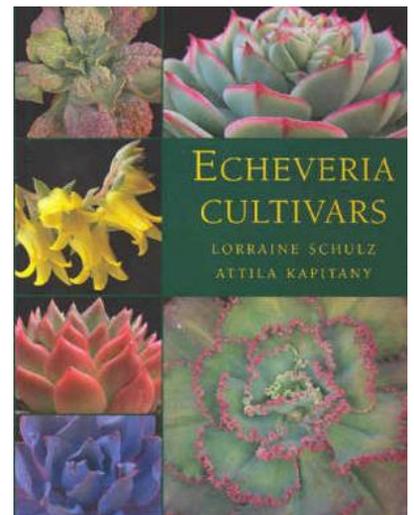
Further afield, outside the previously known range of habitats, Echeverias have been found in Guatemala, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Argentina, so its range has been vastly enlarged even though not thoroughly explored yet. Chile seems not to have been explored yet. Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama are also unexplored mostly due to the rampant drug trade in cocaine and its associated war-lords and cartels of armed thugs. Most of the Echeverias found in these regions are denizens of misty and drippy mountain cliff faces and need quite different cultural practices to those we are familiar with. Some are noted as extremely difficult in cultivation. That need not bother readers too much as these new species are not generally available outside a few collections in botanical gardens.

All of this, summed up, has led to the need for a complete review of the genus and how its various species relate to each other.

For amateur gardeners, the most attractive parts of the book are the numerous excellent coloured illustrations of the species for these

will be of great assistance in identifying which plants they made already have, and confirm, or otherwise, the identity of named plants available from commercial outlets.

The text written by Pilbeam is easy to read and understand. Special attention should be paid to his comments about cultivation for these will 'correct' planting habits and expectations that while accepted as common knowledge can also be fatal to these beautiful succulent plants. While they are mostly easy to grow, they are not foolproof cast-iron plants.



A very handy companion volume written by Australian Echeveria experts, Lorriane Schulz and Attila Kapitany, ECHEVERIA CULTIVARS (Schulz Publishing, 2005) describes in words and pictures many of the recent hybrids and cultivars grown in our gardens.



## Open Gardens SA Annual General Meeting



OPEN  
GARDENS  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

### Notice is given that the Annual General Meeting of Open Gardens South Australia Inc will be held on:

Date: Monday July 26, 2021  
Time: 6–8pm  
Venue: SA Country Women's Association House, 30 Dequetteville Terrace, Kent Town.

### Order of Business

- Minutes from AGM 2020.
- Consideration of the Accounts.
- Report from Chair of the Committee.
- Election of committee members.
- *Please note that due to Covid, there will be no speaker this year.*

### Election of Committee Members

- The election of committee members will take place at the AGM on 26 July, 2021.
- The Committee comprises a minimum of 10 people and a maximum of 18 people.
- A committee member must be a current paid up member of OGSA Inc.
- Retiring committee members are eligible to stand for re-election without nomination.
- Any other member who wishes to stand for election must be nominated by a current member of OGSA before June 28, 2021. Both the nominee and the proposer must sign the nomination and send it by email to the [Secretary](#) or by post to PO Box 1184, Stirling SA 5152. *NOTE: OGSA Members were advised by email of these requirements prior to the deadline.*

We invite OGSA Members to attend. Please note that due to Covid-19, numbers will be limited so please RSVP to the Admin Officer, Sonia Green at: [office@opengardensa.org.au](mailto:office@opengardensa.org.au). Please also note there will be no guest speaker this year.



## OGSA Season commences on 21 & 22 August 2021 – Metzger Garden in Stirling

We are delighted to advise that our first garden for the Winter / Spring Season will be open on the weekend of the 21 and 22 August 2021. The Metzger garden is located in Stirling in the beautiful Adelaide Hills. This is a pretty Hills property with big trees,

camellias, hellebores and around 100 tree ferns bordering the little winding paths that lead to a creek at the bottom of the garden.

The property is approx., 4,000 square metres and when purchased in 1989 consisted of willow trees and blackberries which have been removed and now the garden includes azaleas and magnolia, as well as the nearly 60 camellias, hellebores and the tree ferns.

There are also beautiful bulbs which flower in spring including bluebells, daffodils, anemones and freesias.

Summer shows off the Hydrangea blooms.

The garden also includes a range of sculptures, both purchased and works crafted by the garden owners.

Full details will be available on the OGSA webpage from early August:

<http://opengardensa.org.au/>

### Garden Diversity

The gardens that open for Open Gardens SA are chosen to reflect a great diversity of styles and may even challenge the conventional view of what constitutes a garden. While aspects of a garden may not be to your taste, we urge you to celebrate this diversity.

Please remember you are visiting a private home and show respect and sensitivity for the owners who have so generously shared their garden with you.

Thank you.

*OGSA Recommends....*

We recommend you always check our website for garden opening details. The website is an up-to-date, reliable and informative site which lists each open garden with a description of the garden, address (including a map), photographs, the availability of refreshments etc. The official Garden Notes written by the garden owner are also provided which you can read in advance or print and take a copy with you for your garden visit. Importantly, our website will always list any late additions or cancellations to our garden opening program.

<http://opengardensa.org.au/>

Open Gardens SA 2021 Winter  
and early Spring Calendar – A Full list will be available  
on our Website.

Entry Fee \$8 per Adult, Limited Concessions available, Under 18 free.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

*In these uncertain and variable times, it is important to confirm garden openings by checking our webpage. Garden openings will adhere to Government directions applicable to COVID-19.*

**August**

21 - 22

*Metzger Garden, 35 Garrod Crescent, Stirling*

**September**

4 - 5

*Avondale, 146 Avondale Road, Rhynie*

11 - 12

*Rosie and Mick's Garden, 4 Graetz Terrace, Springton*

**19 Sunday ONLY**

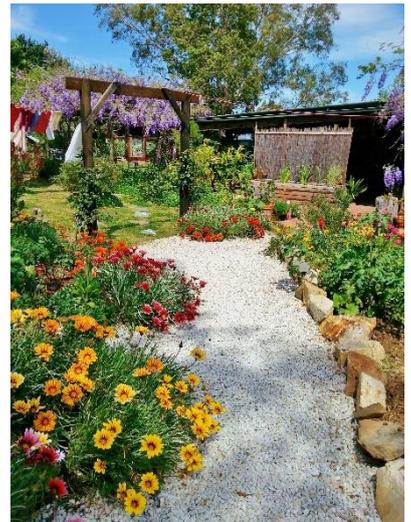
*Al-Ru Farm, 1016 One Tree Hill Road, One Tree Hill. (Plant Fair and open garden)*

25 - 26

*The Working Persons Garden, Ringmer Drive, Burnside*

**26 Sunday ONLY**

*Marybank Farm, 404 Montacute Road, Rostrevor*



*Rosie and Mick's Garden,  
Springton*



*Al-Ru Farm, One Tree Hill*



*The Working Persons  
Garden, Burnside*



*Marybank Farm, Rostrevor*



*Metzger Garden, Stirling*



*Avondale, Rhynie*



## SA Landscape Festival – A Great Weekend!

That's a wrap!! As the first ever SA Landscape Festival, held on the 10 and 11 April 2021, drew to a close, we were full of gratitude and excitement - the Festival was a wonderful success!



**LANDSCAPE**  
**FESTIVAL**

The SA Landscape Festival, presented by Open Gardens SA and Master Landscapers of SA, was created to showcase the outstanding talent present in the Landscaping industry of South Australia, and to expose visitors to some of our State's most beautiful privately owned, professionally designed gardens. And what a privilege that has been.

There is little doubt that the weekend would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of our South Australian Country Women's Assoc. (SACWA) volunteers who staffed each of the SA Landscape Festival gardens, greeting visitors on arrival, punching tickets, and even serving refreshments at a few locations. **THANK YOU** all for your grace and support on what was a momentous weekend. We truly couldn't have done this without the SACWA, and we're proud to be able to support their exceptional work! The SA Landscape Festival raised over \$22,000 which has been presented to the SACWA.

**THANK YOU** to our wonderful garden owners. Without their participation, SA Landscape Festival would not have been possible. We continue to be astounded by their generosity and warmth.

**THANK YOU** to our Master Landscapers SA Designers, Caroline Dawes Gardens, Dowie Designs, Elite Outdoor Design, Ground Design Landscaping, Hedgehogs Gardens, Hills Classic Gardens, Nicki King Landscape Design, The Great Outdaws Landscaping, and Yardstick Landscape Services. Not only are these masterpieces their own creations, but the Designers put their heart and soul into engaging with visitors to the gardens. Their passion is inspiring, and we thank them for all the hard work they put in to make the inaugural SA Landscape Festival a success.

**THANK YOU** to our Festival Sponsors, SALIFE magazine, Adelaide Tree Farm, Basket Range Sandstone, Cleveland Nursery, LED Outdoor + Architectural and The Turf Farm, for supporting an idea and spreading the word of Landscaping in SA.

Finally, A **MASSIVE THANK YOU** to everyone who visited an SA Landscape Festival garden (or many) on this very special weekend in April 2021.



## Floral Emblem of South Australia - Sturt's Desert Pea. *Swainsona Formosa* (plant family: Fabaceae)

Extract from: <https://www.anbg.gov.au/emblems/sa.emblem.html>

Written by Anne Boden for a booklet published by AGPS for the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) in 1985.

Sturt's Desert Pea, *Swainsona formosa*, was adopted as the floral emblem of South Australia on 23 November 1961, using the name *Clianthus formosus*.

This species, a member of the pea family, Fabaceae, is confined to Australia, where it occurs in all mainland States except Victoria. The original collection was made in 1699 by [William Dampier](#) on Rosemary Island in the Dampier Archipelago where he collected a specimen from:

"a creeping vine that runs along the ground ... and the blossom like a bean blossom, but much larger and of a deep red colour looking very beautiful".



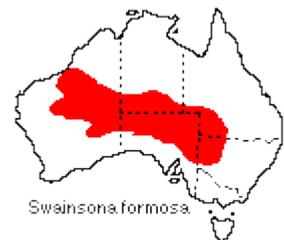
This specimen is now housed in the Sherardian Herbarium, Oxford. The species was for many years included in the genus *Clianthus* now thought to be confined to New Zealand.

Captain Charles Sturt (1795-1869) noted the occurrence of *Swainsona Formosa* in 1844 while exploring between Adelaide and central Australia, and the common name, Sturt's Desert Pea, commemorates a notable explorer of inland Australia, as well as indicating the plant's habitat and family. Sturt's journal, Narrative of an Expedition into Central Australia, refers several times to the beauty of the desert pea in flower and the harsh nature of its habitat, and notes that beyond the Darling River:

"we saw that beautiful flower the *Clianthus formosa* [sic] in splendid blossom on the plains. It was growing amid barrenness and decay, but its long runners were covered with flowers that gave a crimson tint to the ground".

The genus name *Swainsona* honours Isaac Swainson who maintained a private botanic garden at Twickenham near London about the year 1789. The specific name *Formosa* is Latin for 'beautiful'. The original author of the species was the Scottish botanist, George Don (1798-1856).

In its natural habitat Sturt's Desert Pea is a perennial plant with silky grey-green pinnate foliage arising from prostrate stems. The leaves and stems are covered with downy hairs. The flowers are about 9 cm long and arranged in clusters of six to eight on short, thick, erect stalks. The petals are usually blood red or scarlet with a glossy black swelling or 'boss' at the base of the uppermost petal, the standard. Other colour forms range from white to deep pink, either with or without a black boss, and rarely a bicoloured form, in which the standard is scarlet and the other petals, the wings and keel, are white tipped and edged with scarlet. The fruit is a legume about 5 cm long which splits at maturity releasing several flat kidney-shaped seeds.



Sturt's Desert Pea occurs in arid woodlands and on open plains, often as an ephemeral following heavy rain. It is able to withstand the marked extremes of temperature experienced in inland deserts, and light frosts are tolerated by established plants.

Sturt's Desert Pea is protected in South Australia. The flowers and plants must not be collected on private land without the written consent of

the owner. Collection on Crown land is illegal without a permit.

The hard seed coat of Sturt's Desert Pea inhibits germination. This effect can be overcome by filing or nicking the seed coat away from the 'eye' of the seed; alternatively, the seed may be rubbed gently between sheets of sandpaper. Soaking the seed in warm water gives variable results, boiling water should not be used as it destroys beneficial bacteria on the seed coat. Since the seedlings develop a long tap root and do not tolerate root disturbance, treated seeds should be planted directly into the chosen garden site or container, or alternatively into small pots for transplanting soon after germination.

Full sun, perfect drainage and protection from snails are essential. Supplementary watering may not be necessary once the seedlings are established. Under ideal conditions flowering commences about four months after germination. Sturt's Desert Pea is usually treated as an annual but vigorous flowering may result if root crowns survive from one season to the next. Alternatively, it may be grown in large drums, tubs and upright terracotta drainpipes which allow adequate root development.

*Swainsona Formosa* was introduced to England in 1855. It proved difficult to grow on its own roots, but grafted on to *Colutea arborescens*, Bladder Senna, it produced an admirable plant for hanging baskets.

Tissue culture is also used to propagate Sturt's Desert Pea. Small pieces of stem tissue are grown on a nutrient medium under sterile laboratory conditions. This method produces large numbers of identical plants from a small amount of parent tissue and is a means of maintaining unusual colour forms.



Sturt's Desert Pea was depicted on the 20 cent stamp designed by Dorothy Thornhill as part of a set of six stamps issued on 10 July 1968, featuring floral

emblems of the Australian States. The South Australian emblem was repeated on the 7 cent and 10 cent stamps, two of a set of six stamps issued on 1 October 1971 and 15 January 1975 respectively.

The distinctive shape of Sturt's Desert Pea makes it ideal for use on insignia, and on decorative items where it is readily identified either in realistic or stylised form. The armorial bearings of South Australia include two crossed branches of wattle at the base of the

shield. These bearings, which were granted in 1936, the Centenary Year, do not include the floral or faunal emblems of the State.

## South Australia's State Emblems.

The seven state emblems are unique representations of South Australia's flora, fauna, cloth, geology and marine life.

The **Sturt's Desert Pea** was adopted as South Australia's **floral emblem** on 23 November 1961.

The southern hairy-nosed wombat was adopted as South Australia's **fauna emblem** on 27 August 1970.

The opal was adopted as South Australia's **gemstone emblem** on 15 August 1985.

The leafy sea dragon was adopted as South Australia's **marine emblem** on 8 February 2001.

The *Spriggina Floundersi* was adopted as South Australia's **fossil emblem** on 14 February 2017.

Bornite was adopted as South Australia's **mineral emblem** on 28 June 2017.

The State Tartan (registration number 2534) was adopted as South Australia's **State Tartan** on 20 February 2018.





*Presentation of the proceeds from the SA Landscape Festival to the SA Country Women's Association on 1 June 2021.*

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Open Gardens South Australia is a not for profit organisation opening private gardens to the general public.

The purpose of Open Gardens SA is to educate and promote the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening in South Australia and to build strong public support for the development of gardens.

**Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening.**

**Our mailing address is:**

Open Gardens SA Inc  
PO Box 1184  
STIRLING SA 5152

Website: <http://opengardensa.org.au/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/opengardensa/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/opengardensa/?hl=en>

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*Editors: Di Michalk and Trevor Nottle.*

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