



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

Open Gardens South Australia

Welcomes you to **Moralana**

Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 October, 2019 6 Branch Road, Stirling

History

The Halliday family pioneered the European settlement of this part of Stirling in the 1840s. They cleared bush, and planted fruit and vegetables. They built a stone and slab hut - the remains of which can be seen at the bottom of our garden. In the 1850s they built a bigger two roomed stone cottage which was incorporated into the present house in 1900. They also planted Lombardy poplars, the big English oak and Sycamore. Other families subsequently owned the property and also concentrated on a utilitarian garden. When we purchased the property in February 1965 it contained only one Australian native plant - the large Banksia. (sadly a third of it has recently blown down in storms.)

Much of the boundary of the property was a clipped blackberry hedge useful for harvesting fruit. This was a working garden - rows of Watsonia were harvested for craft work, and camellias, English lavender and other flowers were harvested for sale. When we purchased the property we set about making a low maintenance garden containing what were regarded at the time as appropriate Australian plants. (Many of these we would certainly not plant today.) The Spotted and Tasmanian Blue gums are examples of our 1960s plantings.

Garden as Habitat

Our guiding principle has been to make an interesting garden which is a good habitat for native birds and other native wildlife. How we are succeeding can be judged from the present birdlife. (a copy of our birdlist is available on request at entrance) Australian natives have been preferred but we have been careful to eliminate Australian species from other areas which become feral and invasive in local bushland.

Visuals

Plantings are aimed to have "depth", contrast form, texture and colour, as well as suiting the situation. Our garden is a work in progress with areas constantly being redeveloped or changed.

Grassed areas

We do not attempt to grow manicured lawn. Grassed areas are informal and allowed to reflect the season - mossy and wet in winter, lush in spring, and stressed in summer. As microclimates have developed it has been fascinating to see the "Baby's Tears" spreading (we have never planted it!)

Watering

The garden is watered on a restricted basis and some of it not at all. The bore provides most water but a Septic sand filter system treats all household grey and black water to become clean and good quality for garden use. Mains water has only been used once in the last ten years when the bore broke down.

Open Gardens South Australia Inc: 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.

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

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

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Some plants regarded as high water use can be surprisingly drought tolerant in the Hills if they are able to develop a good root system, and are well mulched. Many of our Hydrangeas, larger Camellias and Tree Ferns are over 70 years old and survive with modest watering.

Fertilizers, insecticides and fungicides

Sheep manure is used in the vegetable garden and slow release fertilizer for some pots. No other fertilizer is used. Prunings are mostly mulched. No insecticides or fungicides are used. We are prepared to accept some damage from insects and fungus diseases as a trade-off for having a clean environment.

Pots

Many of the large pots were made by David's great uncle. Our experience has been that Grass Trees (Xanthorrhoea species) are the most drought proof pot plant.

Wildlife

Koalas are common residents, eastern grey kangaroos, echidnas, possums, reptiles, native black rats, and 50 species of birds now visit, or use, our garden as their territory.

We expect to see southern brown bandicoots, and yellow footed antichinus - (both Endangered species) as they live in the conservation reserve bordering our garden.

Thank you for visiting our garden. We hope that it has inspired you on how Australian natives can be incorporated in an old hills garden to benefit bird and wildlife biodiversity, reduce water use and produce interesting visuals. We invite you to **sign the visitor's book** at the gate as you leave.

David and Lorraine Ragless

Open Gardens South Australia is aiming to significantly reduce its impact on the environment and we hope you support us in this endeavour. Please return your garden notes as you leave so they can be reused and recycled.

The gardens that open for us 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.