



# Summer Newsletter 2023



*David Austin Rose – Charlotte*

After such a wet, cold and windy Spring, Summer has been eagerly anticipated by many of us! The change in conditions may be challenging for our gardens (and us) which have not experienced the usual steady rise in temperatures and opportunity to “harden up” ahead of the heat. It will be interesting to see how our gardens cope. Open Gardens SA takes a short break from opening gardens in December – and returns with more gardens in the New Year. And finally, the Open Gardens SA Committee wish you all a very safe and Happy Christmas.

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## Summer Open Gardens

### December 2022

Open Gardens SA takes a short break in December and returns in January 2023

### January 15 2023 Sunday ONLY

Al Ru Farm – One Tree Hill

### January 21 - 22

Littlewood Farm, The  
Agapanthus Farm -  
Littlehampton

### January 13 – 28

Theatre in the Garden, *The  
Scarlet Pimpernel*, three  
locations - Victor Harbor,  
Hahndorf and Blackwood

### February 04 -05

Cascade Water Garden -  
Crafers

### February 11 -12

Harvest Garden Festival -  
various locations

**See the program on our  
website:**

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



## Theatre in the Garden – *The Scarlet Pimpernel!* A revolution of romance, danger and laughs.



**They seek him here, they seek him there...**

In January 2023, *Open Gardens SA* and *Blue Sky Theatre* will present an outdoor performance of *The Scarlet Pimpernel*.

Adapted from Baroness Orczy's novel, the outdoor show promises romance, danger and laughs set amongst the streets of Paris

during the French revolution in 1792.

Armed with only his wits and his cunning, one man recklessly defies the French revolutionaries to rescue aristocrats from the deadly guillotine.

Our dashing hero hides in plain sight by pretending to be the biggest fool in London. But a ruthless French agent is sworn to discover his identity and stop him at any cost.

According to the director, Dave Simms, *The Scarlet Pimpernel* is a cheeky swashbuckling romp packed with daring deeds and jolly japes.

As performances are outdoors, there's plenty of room to enjoy a picnic washed down with a drink from the bar. It's a colourful and energetic experience under the stars.



Starring / Simon Barnett / Ashley Bell / Joshua Coldwell / Emily Currie / Gary George / Miriam Keane / Callum Logan / Steve Marvanek / Michelle Nightingale / Nicole Ruddy / Eddie Sims / Kate Van Der Horst / Leighton Vogt / Maxwell Whigham/

Director / Dave Simms

**Tickets are \$35 including a complimentary program. LIMITED TICKETS AVAILABLE.**

[13,14 & 15 January 2023 Brook Road Garden, Lower Inman Valley, VICTOR HARBOR](#)

[20, 21 & 22 January 2023 The Cedars HAHNDORF](#)

[26, 27 & 28 January 2023 Wittunga Botanic Garden BLACKWOOD](#)

**Tickets are on sale from [blueskytheatre.com.au](http://blueskytheatre.com.au)**



## A Successful Spring Program Despite the Wet Conditions!

Our spring program of open gardens concluded with the final gardens open on the weekend of the 26 and 27 November 2022.

Thank you to our garden owners who so generously opened their gardens to the public - it takes a lot of work to prepare a garden, and this is very much appreciated! Thank you to all the volunteers who assisted at the open days - welcoming visitors at the gate, serving refreshments, selling plants etc., And a BIG thank you to all the people who visited an open garden. It's been a very wet spring and often the weekend weather has been less than ideal and the enthusiasm for visiting gardens is both encouraging and appreciated!

Due to the weather, we had a few garden cancellations, and we hope to be able to bring you these gardens in the future.

The Open Gardens SA team is now busy preparing for a fantastic program of open gardens in 2023!





## Harvest Garden Festival - Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th February 2023



*Brought to you by Open Gardens SA with proceeds to OzHarvest.*

Open Gardens SA proudly presents the Harvest Garden Festival 2023. A weekend to explore and share the knowledge, resources, community spirit and many benefits of productive gardening. Explore productive gardens in Adelaide and Strathalbyn, from the seaside to the hills and learn the secrets to planting and harvesting your own home-grown, healthy food.

Discover how to enjoy harvesting home-grown food in any garden, big or small. A vegetable patch not only supplies you with nutritious goodness it also enriches your day-to-day life by inspiring you to get outside and connect with nature.



The gardens for this special event have been selected for numerous reasons and each one has different elements and stories that visitors will be able to observe and immerse themselves in. The gardens vary greatly from small to large, old and new, some professionally designed and constructed and also community gardens tended by their passionate members.

Altogether the gardeners have decades of experience in food growing and they will be available to answer questions and give advice. In addition, some of the gardens will have informative talks or demonstrations by speakers with expertise in productive gardening, permaculture, organic gardening, compost making, wicking bed construction, preserving food, attracting beneficial insects, etc and some will have refreshments available.

Visitors will be able to investigate which soils work best, the different types of irrigation systems that can be used, the multitude of materials that are available to construct raised beds and what vegetables, fruits, nuts and herbs grow best in different situations and areas.

The stories and reasons behind these gardens are both incredible and inspirational. Some of our garden owners have built their plot with the hope of eating healthier foods and living a better life whereas others have been exposed to or accidentally discovered the multitude of benefits, both physically and mentally that growing and consuming your own, home grown food will bring.



Finally it brings our hardworking, voluntary committee great pleasure in being able to give the garden loving public of South Australia the opportunity to discover these productive gardens that would not be normally accessible.

In addition to this, the proceeds (net profit) of the festival will be kindly handed over to **OzHarvest** who deliver thousands of meals every week to people in need.

Founded by Ronni Kahn AO in 2004 after noticing the huge volume of food going to waste, OzHarvest has quickly grown to become Australia's leading food rescue organisation.

Every \$1 donated to OzHarvest ensures 2 meals can be provided to men, women and children in need.

Details of the Garden Harvest Festival are available on our website and tickets are now available to purchase:

<https://harvest.opengardensa.org.au/>

**Buy a \$20 pass to see any four gardens of your choice, or a \$50 pass to visit all the gardens.** What a great Christmas gift idea for yourself, or those in your life who love to grow their own!

**Book now at [Ticket Bookings Harvest Garden Festival 2023](#)**



## Master Landscapers of SA Awards of Excellence



We are delighted to let you know that our hard-working committee member, **Jamie McIlwain**, has swept the field at the 2022 Master Landscapers of SA Awards of Excellence, winning more awards than any other master landscaper.

The awards included his own garden, Wellswood Cottage, which he and his wife Sally

kindly opened as part of our Spring program of open gardens. Jamie's awards include:

- Residential Landscape Design - Exceeding \$250,000
- Residential Landscape Construction - Exceeding \$250,000
- Residential Landscape Construction - \$150,000 - \$250,000
- Residential Landscape Construction - Under \$70,000
- Residential Landscape Maintenance
- Individual Landscape Feature
- Judges' Choice Award



JUDGES' CHOICE AWARD  
HILLS CLASSIC GARDENS  
WELLSWOOD COTTAGE

**WINNER**  
2022 AWARDS OF  
Excellence



FRANK UGODY MEMORIAL AWARD  
DAVID HURST  
PRESENTED BY KATHERINE UGODY & SIMONE WIRKUS

**WINNER**  
2022 AWARDS OF  
Excellence

At the same award ceremony, our former committee member **David Hurst** was awarded the prestigious Frank Ugody Memorial Award.



FRANK UGODY MEMORIAL AWARD  
DAVID HURST  
PRESENTED BY KATHERINE UGODY & SIMONE WIRKUS

**WINNER**  
2022 AWARDS OF  
Excellence

Congratulations gentlemen! And many thanks for your contributions to Open Gardens SA.



RESIDENTIAL LANDSCAPE DESIGN EXCEEDING \$250,000  
HILLS CLASSIC GARDENS  
WELLSWOOD COTTAGE  
SPONSORED BY HERBES WHOLESALE NURSERY

**WINNER**  
2022 AWARDS OF  
Excellence





## OGSA Garden Owner "Thank You" Function

On Sunday 4 December 2022, Open Gardens SA hosted a thank-you event to thank our garden owners for so generously opening their gardens to the public. Due to the restrictions we all faced over recent years due to COVID, garden owners from the past three years were invited to the function. So, there was a lot of catching up and reminiscing to do!



Guests enjoyed drinks and canapes at the beautiful Mitcham home and garden of two of our Committee members. The afternoon weather was warm (a nice change!), and the lovely garden setting was perfect for an enjoyable afternoon of good conversation with gardening friends.

Thankyou to Tom and Marg for hosting this event – it was the perfect

opportunity to say "Thankyou" and conclude our spring season for 2022.



## Bromley House Library and Garden (UK) - Diary Date for April 2023

*Trevor Nottle, Australian Garden Council*

In April, 2023 Bromley House Library and Garden will host a series of **webcasts featuring garden writers**. The webcasts will be free and the organisers would be delighted to have Australian viewers join the programmes. The real-time hours will probably not fit with Australian time but each programme will be recorded and available on-line for several weeks after the initial broadcast.

Among the presenters will be **Michael Marriott**, former head rosarian at David Austin Roses, **Todd Longstaffe-Gowan**, author of *English Garden Eccentrics*, **Trevor Nottle**, on *A brief history of*

*gardening in Australia*, **Sandra Lawrence**, author of *Miss Wilmott's Ghosts* and **Sally Vickers**, best selling author of *The Garden*.

Bromley House is an almost intact Georgian town-house that became a private subscription library in Victorian times. It still operates today but under a Trust committed to its preservation and remaining a valued community resource and asset. For more information, stories and photos visit:

<https://bromleyhouse.org>

"IF YOU HAVE A GARDEN AND A LIBRARY, YOU HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED..."

Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 – 43 BC)

*Bromley House Library, founded in 1816, is a flourishing independent lending library situated in the centre of Nottingham (UK) and is one of the few remaining subscription libraries in the country.*

*The building houses nearly 50,000 books and has a tranquil and relaxed atmosphere. In addition to the many fine reading rooms spread over three floors of a Grade II listed Georgian townhouse, there is a beautiful walled garden, which is one of only two remaining in the city centre.*

**Bromley House Library**  
Angel Row,  
Nottingham NG1 6HL



### OGSA Recommends...

**We recommend you always check our website to confirm garden opening details prior to visiting.** 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/>

### OGSA 2023 Summer Calendar

Entry Fee \$10 per Adult, Limited Concessions available, Under 18 free.

#### December 2022

Open Gardens SA takes a short break in December and returns in January 2023.

#### January 2023

##### **15 – Sunday ONLY**

*Al Ru Farm* – 1016 One Tree Hill Road, One Tree Hill.

##### **13 - 28**

*Theatre in the Garden, The Scarlet Pimpernel*, three locations:

Brook Road, **Victor Harbor** on January 13, 14 and 15

The Cedars in **Hahndorf** on January 20, 21 and 22

Wittunga Botanic Garden in **Blackwood** on January 26, 27 and 28

**Book your tickets early as many performances are already sold out!**

##### **21 – 22**

*Littlewood Farm, The Agapanthus Farm* - 69 Easlea Road, Littlehampton

#### February 2023

##### **04 – 05**

*Cascade Water Garden* - 2 Fairview Road Crafrers

##### **11 - 12**

*Harvest Garden Festival* – various locations in Adelaide and the greater metropolitan area. Visit one, visit all – approximately 15 productive gardens opening over one exciting weekend.

##### **18 - 19**

*Joe's Connected Garden* – 6 Argent Street Elizabeth Grove

**Please Note: For 2023 each garden will only open if deemed safe to do so by Government Authorities and will follow COVID-19 guidelines as may be in place at the time.**



*Al Ru Farm, One Tree Hill*



*Littlewood Farm, Littlehampton*



*Theatre in the Garden, The Scarlet Pimpernel, Victor Harbor, Hahndorf & Blackwood*



*Cascade Water Garden, Crafrers*

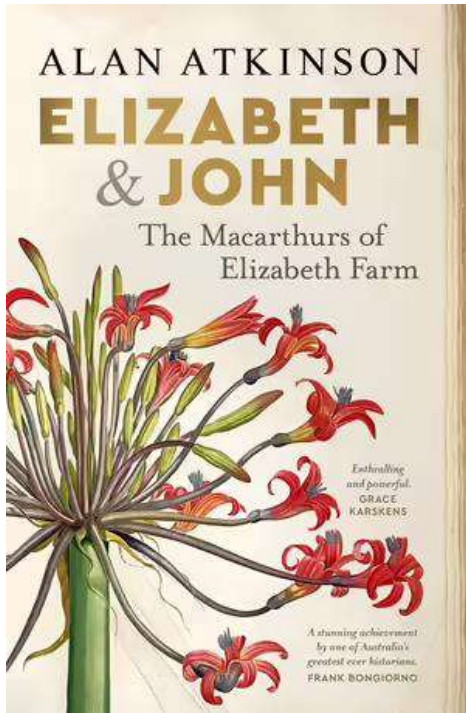


*Harvest Garden Festival, Various locations in Adelaide and greater metropolitan area*



## Book Review - ELIZABETH & JOHN The Macarthur's of Elizabeth Farm, by Alan Atkinson, New South Publishing, Sydney, 2022

Review By Trevor Nottle



This very substantial book will make great reading over the holiday season for gardeners and non-gardeners alike. The dual biography presents in much detail the lives and inner-most thoughts of two equally important early Australians. The author draws together a massive correspondence between the two principals, and their friends, foes and large family. With it Atkinson knits a compelling narrative of the contrasting, sometimes conflicting and always interesting interaction between Elizabeth and John Macarthur.

The author makes clear his admiration of Elizabeth, the person he assesses as the all-important glue that kept the family, their careers and their business ventures on track and together; not easy when the cast of scattered characters were spread from Australia to England and Scotland, and the characters themselves were opinionated and strong willed. While some were more mild tempered than others there was always a tension and volatility between them. Yet for their differences wife and husband somehow stayed true and supported the value of family as the focus of their shared purpose in life.

Not wishing to spoil the story the author has so painstakingly put together it would be most unfair for any reviewer to reveal more but to say there are some facts that will surprise and other beliefs challenged by the content.

A marvellous story very well told which presents one of Australia's most prominent colonial couples in greater depth than previous biographies have managed, and within a rich and deep loom of information and interpretation.

## Purple Beech Genetics Project

Present at the recent World Federation of Rose Societies conference in Adelaide was Dr Andreas Meier-Dinkel from Staufenberg in Germany. Dr Meier is the manager of the Heritage, Shrub and Species rose collection at Wilhelmshoe Park at Kassel. Apart from his interest in roses he also works as a geneticist in the botanical department of the park administration. To this end his visit to South Australia was directed at research he is conducting into tracing the genetic map of Copper Beech trees everywhere in the world. Originating in Germany around 1604 all trees now extant have been propagated from this first beech tree with copper/purple coloured leaves.

Dr Meier asks that anyone who has a copper beech in their garden - **ATTENTION Adelaide Hills gardeners** - sends him one leaf from their tree for genetic testing. Simply enclose one leaf in a fold of clean white paper marking it with your name, email address, city/town, state and, if known, where the tree was purchased, and its age.

In return Dr Meier will send a copy of his research results when his project is completed. Send leaf samples to: Dr Andreas Meier-Dinkel, Kaufunger Waldstrasse 2, D-34355 Staufenberg, Germany.

Trevor Nottle, Australian Garden Council

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## SA Landscape Festival - Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th April 2023

*Photographs from the 2021 SA Landscape Festival*



Would-be green thumbs have a rare chance to peek behind the fences of professionally designed private gardens on Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 April 2023.

These select SA gardens will fling open their gates enabling visitors to learn from garden design gurus and pick up tips on creating their own perfect back yards. From contemporary courtyards with firepits and entertaining areas, to attractive, easy-to-maintain family friendly backyards, there are ideas for every sized garden.



During April 2021 and across 12 locations in Adelaide, the inaugural SA Landscape Festival welcomed over 2,500 patrons through the gates of our states most beautiful and

professionally landscaped gardens. The success of the Festival helped donate over \$22,000 to the wonderful volunteers at the South Australian Country Women's Association. **Open Gardens SA** and **Master Landscapers of SA** are delighted to now bring you our **second Festival** dedicated to our state's landscaped gardens, each created for their owners by design professionals.

The proud owners have generously agreed to allow visitors to view their stunning gardens – in locations from the coast to the Adelaide Hills.

SA Country Women's Association will again be volunteering at the gates to raise funds, and each garden designer and / or their representatives will be on-hand to explain their design ideas, offer guidance and information.



Gardens will be open 10:00am to 4:00pm daily over the weekend of the 15 and 16 April 2023, for garden-lovers to collect ideas and admire the work of some of our state's best garden designers.



**Tickets are \$10 per garden or \$50 for an all garden weekend pass.** Children under 12 FREE entry. No Concessions. All proceeds from the SA Landscape Festival will support the SACWA.



To plan your weekend, you can preview the gardens and book tickets at the SA Landscape Festival website: <https://salandscapefestival.com.au/>





## The Cutting Garden at Carrick Hill

By Trevor Nottle

A long time ago Ursula Hayward had a cutting garden at Carrick Hill where she and her gardener, Cliff Jacobs, grew flowers for picking. Ursula was a very keen flower arranger who even had a flower room



under the stairs where she kept vases, urns, plenty of buckets and a variety of aids that kept flowers in place in the containers she selected for them. The room was quite cool and had a tap and a sink, and a door that opened

directly onto the garden.

Ursula also arranged some of the flowers for painting, and she sent flowers from her garden by air to Adrien Feint in Sydney so he could paint them too. It is likely she also sent flowers to Nora Heysen to paint.

While on trips to London with her husband 'Bill' Hayward she kept herself busy while he was doing business for his department store, John Martins, by visiting galleries and antique dealers and visiting the famous florist shop of Constance Spry. She may also have taken lessons from the great floral designer who did the flowers for many Royal and high society events. Among the treasures she brought home for arranging flowers were three Jacobean oak cradles, three ancient copper watering cans and antique porcelain vases.



As flowers for cutting and arranging, and painting, are not anything more than another kind of vegetable growing, the Cutting Garden at Carrick Hill was a very utilitarian affair; long, narrow rectangular beds within wooden edges held in place by wooden pegs driven into the dirt. It was outside the garden proper, hidden from sight behind the high rampart Cypress hedges that are the hallmark of the gardens.

By looking at the flowers Ursula painted and from the memories of her nephew, Christopher Legoe, we are able to piece together some idea of the flowers she grew: dahlias, Jacobean lilies, lilies of the *Lilium* family, delphiniums, tuberose in great quantity, zinnias, ranunculus, Bells of Ireland, gypsophila, carnations and a diversity of annuals that changed from time to time. It seems the Cutting garden was not a permanent feature in the grounds but was created and recreated as necessary. A few of the plantings did persist despite periods of neglect. The tuberose grew year after year and even though they rarely flower without continuous care they did persist in the heavy and hard, poorly drained clay soil on the hill slope above the turning circle.

In 2022, with support from the Carrick Hill Foundation and the Hidden Gardens of Stirling events, I was able to re-establish the Cutting Garden. As the original garden was pretty rough and ready in terms of built features it was necessary to make proper paths and retaining walls before planting took place. A comprehensive automated irrigation system was also installed as part of a larger project to manage the whole garden by such a system. The materials necessary were donated by Toro (Australia) who also assisted the garden staff with the installation and training to use the control system.



First plantings took place in the autumn of 2021 with a selection of ranunculus, tulips, daffodils, lilies and smaller spring bulbs chosen to make a splash when the gardens came to life after winter.



Planting continued with a range of hardy perennials for summer interest and a more or less continuous display. Among these were Eryngiums, echinops, asters, many more lilies, eucomis (pineapple

flower), nerines, scadoxis, gladioli, dahlias, irises and hippeastrums.



Achieving a balance between authenticity and the needs of garden visitors, tourists and bridal parties has meant making some hard decisions. Having a continuous show is an important consideration, as has been the availability of quite a few of the plants Ursula grew that have fallen out of favour with gardeners and the nursery industry. I had to wait three years, after ordering when the garden was no more than an idea at Gardens and Grounds meetings, to get plants of Canary Island Smoke Bush which was an important stuffing material in

50's floral art and, therefore, needed.

While the garden is now fully planted it will not be a static display. Indeed, it cannot be because I, and others, will have to assess the success of each plant: does it survive, does it flower well, is maintenance easy or intensive, how long do tulips continue to flower, are annuals too much work, can we attract a few more volunteers in the garden? And so on.

To find the Cutting Garden at Carrick Hill simply stand in front of the main door and look east up the steps to the walk of 'Pinkie' roses grown on chains and posts, through the gap in the hedges and see the path lined both sides with purple catmint. And that is where you will find it!



## The Christmas Tree: From pagan origins and Christian symbolism to secular status.

By Penny Travers. *Extract shared from: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-12-19/the-history-of-the-christmas-tree/8106078>*

A Christmas tree adorned with ornaments and lights is a centrepiece of the festive season. But have you ever wondered where the tradition comes from?

Evergreen trees and plants have been used to celebrate winter festivals for thousands of years, long before the advent of Christianity. Pagans in Europe used branches of evergreen fir trees to decorate their homes and brighten their spirits during the winter solstice.



Early Romans used evergreens to decorate their temples at the festival of Saturnalia, while ancient Egyptians used green palm rushes as part of their worship of the god Ra.

"The idea of bringing the evergreen into the house represents fertility and new life in the darkness of winter, which was much more of the pagan themes," Dr Dominique Wilson from the University of Sydney said.

"That's also where the ideas of the holly and the ivy and the mistletoe come from because they're the few flowering plants at winter so therefore they hold special significance.

"So the idea of bringing evergreens into the house started there and eventually that evolved into the Christmas tree."

### **From pagan customs to Christianity**

There are several theories and legends as to how the evergreen fir tree went on to become a symbol of Christianity.

One is credited to the English Benedictine monk Boniface, famous for his missionary work in Germany during the eighth century.

"The common story goes that [Boniface] encountered some native Germans performing some sacrifices in front of a mighty oak tree — oak trees being sacred to the god Thor," Dr Wilson said.

"Boniface seized his axe and felled the tree in order to stop the pagans worshipping a false idol and the pagans were waiting for him to be struck



down by lightning, but it didn't happen.

"So at this stage he took the opportunity to convert them."

Then legend has it that a fir tree grew out of the fallen oak.

"That became a symbol of Christ — being triangular in shape it represents the trinity — and from there came the idea that the tree should be a symbol of Christ and new life," Dr Wilson said.

"That's one of the main origins of the Christmas tree and bringing it into the house."

### Modern Christmas trees a German tradition

Modern Christmas trees emerged in western Germany during the 16th century as Christians brought trees into their homes and decorated them with gingerbread, nuts and apples.

"It's the 17th century that we really get the decorating happening, and we get a movement into the festivals and the big royal courts having these trees with the gold leaf on them, having paper decorations with candles," Dr Wilson said.



*19th century painting by German painter Franz Kruger of a father and son collecting a tree in the forest. (Wikimedia Commons)*

The custom became popular among nobility and spread to royal courts across Europe in the early 19th century.

As Germans emigrated to other parts of the world the tradition also spread.

But in places like the United States, having a Christmas tree was often viewed as a foreign pagan custom until the mid-19th century.

### Queen Victoria, Prince Albert popularise Christmas trees

While the Christmas tree originated in Germany, it was Britain's Queen Victoria and Prince Albert who popularised it in the 1840s and 1850s.

Victoria's mother, Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, was German so she grew up having a decorated tree at Christmas time.



But the idea of decorating a whole tree was not common among Brits until a drawing of the royal family celebrating around a decorated Christmas tree in Windsor Castle was published by the Illustrated London News in 1848.

*This illustration of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert with their children around a Christmas tree featured in the Illustrated London News in 1848.*

Victoria and Albert were popular royals and soon every British home had a tree decked out with decorations, candles and sweets.

The same image was published two years later in the United States in Godey's Lady's Book — though Victoria's tiara and Albert's moustache were removed to make the image more American.

It was the first widely circulated picture of a decorated evergreen Christmas tree in the US and soon the Christmas tree was in vogue.

### Christmas trees today

Today, Christmas trees come in all different shapes and sizes from traditional living trees to artificial, and are widely accepted around the world.

The tradition of decorating a tree is embraced by millions of people worldwide of different faiths and cultures.

While it is still a symbol of Christianity to some, to others it is simply part of December celebrations.

"Here in Australia we've embraced the European aspect of Christmas," Dr Wilson said.

"We eat the fish and the prawns, et cetera, but I think we are relatively traditional.

"The fact that so many of us still do the turkey and the ham, placing the gifts under the tree — that's definitely something that links back to European roots."





*Best Wishes for a peaceful and happy Christmas 2022*

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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:**

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

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