From the Branch Head

Our very wintry weather has been a challenge to our gardening comfort but the rain has been marvellous and even the frosts have benefitted the winter flowers by slowing development, and eventually death, well beyond our usual experience in this part of the world.

Feeling very much as though I had spring in my steps I gathered a big bunch of stems, leaves, twigs, berries and flowers from our garden on August 7th and made a casual arrangement to celebrate Margaret's birthday on the 9th. Amusing myself as I went along I considered the possibility of it ranking as an example of the Moribana style of Japanese flower arranging. According to Norman Sparnon, (remember him?), the style is known for being thrown together without much regard for the traditional rules of choice of flowers, composition and placement. I can't claim any expertise in any School - Sogetsu, Rikka, Nageire, Shoka, Jiyuka, Ohara or any other. We liked the arrangement anyway.

Diary Dates - 2015

Members meetings will be held in the
Goodman Building
Hackney Road
Adelaide
(next to National Wine Centre)
at 7.30 pm on
November 12

Committee meeting will be held on
October 8

Garden of Discovery
Working bee will be held from
9.00 to 11.00am on
Sunday, October 11

Open Gardens SA
Details on page 3

At Home with the Hollands
Details on page 19

Christmas function
December 5
The Candlebarks
132 Badenoch Road, Carey Gully
Details to follow

A note from the editors
This issue of the newsletter will be distributed a little later than usual as a consequence of us joining the ‘grey nomads’ for five weeks in July and August. Our trip took us through South Australia and the Northern Territory to Katherine through some of the most inspiring arid lands on offer in Australia.

If you’ve not been to central and northern Australia please add it to your “to do list”; you will not be disappointed.

Ines has written an article for this issue on the Olive Pink Botanic Garden in Alice Springs and there are occasional snippets from David too!
The materials all came from our garden and comprised:

- Hamamelis x intermedia ‘Jelena’
- Mahonia lomariifolia
- Nandina japonica
- Aucuba japonica - berries
- ‘Yellow’ double hellebore hybrid
- Helleborus corsicus
- Rose ‘Papillion’ - heps
- Yellow-leaved ivy, Hedera helix ‘Buttercup’
- Fish-tail camellia ‘Kingyo tsubaki’
- Winter honeysuckle
- Yellow-leaved holly, Ilex ‘Golden Queen’
- Arum italicum
- Yellow and red daffodils
- Yellow and red tazetta narcissi.

Jean Vache commented to me that aucuba is not really a Mediterranean zone plant, and that camellias and hamamelis would find those conditions difficult too. That is true but I am confident any keen Med. gardener could find some suitable replacements such as pyracantha berries, any kinds of deciduous branches and twigs and laurustinus foliage for starters.

So, please accept my winter bunch and consider what you might make from the plants in your own garden.

***The clear glass urn was bought from the gift section of our local chemist shop: $33 marked down to $17, or two for $33! There are some bargains about if you look out for them.

Trevor Nottle

Steven Wells – Churchill Scholar
By Kate Chattaway

One of our recent speakers Steven Wells has been awarded a Churchill scholarship to further his work on the benefits of horticulture for improving the health of patients, their families and staff in hospitals.

Steven, who hails from Murray Bridge but is now based in Melbourne, is unusual in combining the roles of nurse and horticulturalist in his work for Austin Health. When he spoke to SAMGS last year he talked about the transformative power of gardening and the horticultural therapy programme he had developed for the Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre in Kew to help patients recover from serious illness or injury.

Travelling to the US, UK and Singapore for seven weeks, Steven will aim to learn from the best examples of horticultural therapy around the world and bring back that knowledge to Australia. The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust was established in 1965 to honour the memory of Sir Winston Churchill through memorial fellowships. It provides an opportunity for Australians to travel overseas to conduct research in their chosen field and to reward and recognise their achievements.

Ten photography tips
Rosey Boehm

At the recent AGM of SAMGS Rosey Boehm presented an illustrated talk designed to assist those photographers present to improve their skills. Eds.

This is Rosey’s summary of 10 tips that will make a big difference to the overall quality of your photography.

Learn to lock focus. This is the most important step in your photography. When you are about to take a photo, half push the button to focus your camera, wait for the rectangle in the centre of your frame to change from white or red to green. When it’s green then fully push button. (This is a general description, the exact process will vary with different camera brands)

Steady your stance and hold your camera firmly. When you push the button to take your photo make sure it’s a gentle squeeze rather than a hasty and abrupt push. This will ensure that your photographs will be sharp not blurry.

LOOK through your viewfinder – scan all around the rectangle.

- Be aware of background and foreground.
- Are there any distracting objects or colours?
- Does your subject have a tree sticking out of their head?

Learn how to turn your flash ON and OFF. Never use the flash in AUTO mode. The flash has a very limited range, usually 3-4 metres. If you keep this in mind it will help you to decide when to use it.

- It is completely useless inside a large building such as a cathedral or sporting venue.
- If you’re unsure take one photo with flash on and another with flash off.
- Refer to your instruction manual to learn how to turn on and off.

Composition

Main subject should not be in the centre of your photo, place it to the top, bottom or to the side. This is known as ‘Rule of Thirds’.

- Some photos will look better as a vertical composition.
- Position the horizon at top or bottom, not in the centre or the frame.
- Use your zoom to fill the frame with the main point
of interest.

**Look at the lighting on your subjects**, be aware of harsh shadows or strips of bright sunlight.

When taking portraits on a bright sunny day consider turning your flash on. Only useful if the subject is a few metres from the camera. This helps to fill in harsh shadows.

Usually the photographer should have the sun on her shoulder, this ensures she’ll have side lighting.

**Take charge of your subjects** – move and direct them, tell them where you want them to stand or what to do.

**Use a tripod**. Useful for night or inside photography.

**Have fun and take lots** (but not too many) of photos and experiment.

**Read your instruction manual!** I’m sure it’s somewhere in the back of a cupboard, collecting dust!

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**Open Gardens SA. Virginia Sheridan**

Open Gardens SA is up, up and away after recently launching its first season! Many MGS members have joined OGSA so lots of you reading this will have been at the recent launch held in the lovely garden of St Austell on Glynburn Road.

Nick Mitzevich, director of the Art Gallery and keen gardener, spoke giving an account of his early start to the day and his eventful morning spent salvaging plants from a skip! His speech would have hit a chord with all gardeners present – acquiring stunning super-sized succulents bound for the tip is something that would excite most of us! Members and media, a superb venue, good wine donated by The Lane, plenty of food and even a welcome bit of sunshine all combined to make it a promising and positive start for OGSA and the 2015/16 season of open gardens.

Several MGS members’ gardens will open this spring and I will copy descriptions from the OGSA website. Notes written by each garden owner will be on the website [www.opengardenssa.org.au](http://www.opengardenssa.org.au) approximately two weeks before the open date. Also on there are details of all the gardens opening for the season – and a membership form if you would like to join!

Members benefits include an invitation to the annual launch, access to some gardens only open to members, a ticket that allows ‘two for one’ garden entry to one garden, and several other perks. Your subscription will help to provide financial security for the organization and ensure the continuation of the treasured tradition of opening gardens in SA.

Tupelo Grove Nursery will generously continue to supply plants for sale at members’ gardens and a share of funds from sales will be donated to SAMGS. Members are needed to sell the plants – don’t be concerned about your plant knowledge not being perfect as all have labels which include good information on growing requirements for each plant. If you can help for a couple of hours, Kate Chattaway has an almost empty roster and she would love to hear from you – email [rpchattaway@bigpond.com](mailto:rpchattaway@bigpond.com) or phone 82768780.

If you missed the launch, St Austell will open again on September 26 and 27 with proceeds going to Guide Dogs SA. The magnificent 1927 ‘gentleman’s residence’ is surrounded by huge grounds which are beautifully maintained, there are magnificent old trees and the garden beds are crammed with plants. As well there is a huge variety of vegetables and fruit trees all grown organically. Well worth a visit as few big old properties like this one remain.

Earlier this year when OGSA sent out an SOS asking for gardens to open, MGS members quickly and willingly responded – many thanks to all who are opening. We...
hope you will support these garden owners and visit their gardens – they are all different, all are beautiful and each has a wonderful collection of Mediterranean plants.

During spring the following gardens belonging to SAMGS members will be open on Saturdays and Sundays as indicated from 10.00 am to 4.30 pm.

**GABLE ENDS**
27 Carrick Hill Drive Mitcham
September 12 and 13

Description: Wonderful, multi-level garden suiting the era of Margaret Wilkinson’s beautiful Heritage Listed 1845 stone house. Mature trees are a feature of this stately garden, with elms, Judas trees, eucalyptus and other Australian natives. There are many hardy and water wise plants, including roses, wisteria, salvias, catmint, lavender, iris, succulents, clipped westringia balls and garden art giving structure and interest. Sculptures by Anna Small, Warren Pickering and Manning Sculptures will be dotted through the garden and along the creek bed sculpture trail. (0.3ha)

The nominated Charity for this garden is the Magdalene Centre.

**LITTLETON GARDEN**
20 Douglas Street, Magill
October 10 and 11

Description: Jane Littleton’s beautiful and inspiring small garden is full of ideas. Clipped balls and hedges of murraya, box and westringia define and give structure. Roses, hardy perennials, grasses, shrubs and trees are all used in pleasing combinations. Climbing roses festoon the back veranda posts. The gentle sloping block has a stone wall and focal point of a *Eucalyptus cinerea* under-planted with succulents. Clever planting creates interest with leaf size, colour, shape and texture. Some vegetables are planted within an attractive box hedged circular bed, and others are in an area close to the house.

Fruit trees and chooks also play an important part in this pretty and colourful garden.

**BEARD GARDEN**
134 Beulah Road, Norwood
October 17 and 18

Description: Margaret Beard has tended and developed this elegant garden for more than forty-five years, overseeing its evolution from a sunny semi-formal and predominantly white garden into a mature, sheltered oasis brimful of colour themed cottage plants justling for attention and light. The ten years of dryer than usual summers and increasing root competition from the huge elms, jacarandas, brachychiton and camphor laurel has prompted her to experiment with more drought and shade tolerant species from other Mediterranean climate regions. Delphiniums, campanula, iris and poppies and self-sown valerian and nigella intermingle with roses in an exuberant spring display and the jacarandas in bloom are a breath-taking sight. The perfume from philadelphus, roses and jasmine fills the air. A walled garden with a mosaic tiled floor marks the site where a conservatory once stood and where today roses and clematis clamber over arches and pillars. A raised pond with running water is another delightfully subtle feature. The fences surrounding the lawn tennis court provide support for a collection of favourite climbing roses, notably, Crepuscule, Cicely Lascelles and Sally Holmes.

One corner is devoted to growing vegetables which thrive due to the generous application of mulch compost and manures. (0.4 ha)

The nominated Charity for this garden is the St Johns Cadets.

**BOATS END, Currency Creek**
191 Adelaide Place, Currency Creek
October 17 and 18

Description: Boat’s End is set on the side of a sweeping hill overlooking the Goolwa lakes system. The Mediterranean style garden has many different plantings that have been established successively over the past decade. Plantings include echium, succulents, furcraea, salvia, euphorbia, sedums and natives. The garden relies on rainwater alone. Boat’s End has featured in gardening programs on television and is written up in a number of eminent garden books because of the successful design elements and plantings suited to the climate and location.

There are a variety of drought tolerant shrubs, groundcovers and grasses laid out in informal beds developed from a bare paddock. Green, silver, grey and brown foliage are contrasted with flowers of many colours. A “spiral” of a local juncus is a favourite with children.

Boat’s End is recognized nationally as an exemplary Mediterranean garden. (1.0 ha)

Directions: From the direction of Strathalbyn or Meadows on the Goolwa Road, turn right into Adelaide Place approximately 1-2 km after Winery Road (off to the left). Alternatively take the Mount Compass to Goolwa Road, turn left at the T-junction towards Strathalbyn. Adelaide Place is 1-2 km on the left.

**GARDEN of EXCENTRIX**
1 Shurdington Road, Crafers
November 14 and 15

Description: Lynn Elzinga-Henry is an artist and as you are drawn through her large informal hills garden everywhere there is evidence of her creative genius. Blue and white ceramic tiles, colourful glass birds, stainless steel cornucopias and garden sculptures are carefully placed against a tapestry of flowers and
foliage. Even the trees and hedges are pruned to draw attention to their naturally striking sculptural forms against the green backdrop of their leaves.

Interestingly most of this garden was destroyed in the 1983 bushfire but a huge English oak protected the house from the fire and although the tree was severely scorched and lost all its leaves, it miraculously regenerated the following spring and now provides dense cool shade for tender plants and a lesson for others living in bushfire prone areas of the hills. Following the fire, the garden has been extensively redeveloped using rocks dug from the soil and bricks and pavers abandoned by the previous owner to create terraces and walls.

Water is used sparingly and most of the ornamental plants are of Mediterranean or Australian origin, chosen because of their tolerance to hot dry summers but adapted also to the cool wet winters. Committed to organic gardening Lynn and Rob continue to experiment with growing and using a wide variety of productive plants including crab apples, berries, quinces, edible flowers, leaves and hips for eating, preserving and wine making.

The nominated charities for this garden are Arts Excentrix and the Mediterranean Garden Society.

**Directions:** From SE freeway take Crafrers exit and first roundabout left up Summit Rd. (From Crafrers) Take Summit Rd, first left into Pottery Drive, left into Shurdington Rd. Last house/entrance on the right with large sculpture gates.

**Extras:** Afternoon music, garden art, (mosaics, sculptures, textiles) studio, secret garden. Music performances both afternoons. Wine maker’s garden tour at 11.00 am both days, with proceeds going to Guide Dogs SA.

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**Middle Eastern Marvels**

**Protecting the rare and endangered plants of Israel**

**Dan Austin**

For many people, a mere mention of the Middle East conjures images of dusty, barren deserts, void of plant life, but arriving in Israel during spring, nothing could be further from the truth.

I have been lucky enough in recent years to travel the world in pursuit of botanical happiness and along the way have met some amazing people eager to share their knowledge on diverse passions from hydroponics to bonsai, halophytes to epiphytes and of course Mediterranean plants which have featured prominently along the way. Some outstanding horticulturally inclined researchers are to be met in this region and in particular at Israel’s Jerusalem Botanic Gardens (JBG).

Here a small team of scientists, scholars and horticulturists are working to preserve the unique flora of the region in the face of a range of both unique challenges and many echoed around the world. Of particular interest in Israel’s spring are the herbaceous perennials and annuals bursting into life across the country and ready to provide a valuable seed supply to the rare plant propagators of the JBG. Israel plays host to some 56 endemic species of plants in addition to many others that, while not considered exclusive to Israel, are rare and endemic to the Levant region of South Western Asia.

The JBG’s preservation projects are overseen by head scientist Ori Fragman-Sapir who is regarded as one of the foremost authorities on the plants of the region. When I accompanied Ori and a small team of scholars on a seed collection expedition to Mount Gilboa on the edge of the Jordan Valley, it became apparent just how minute and elusive some of these species can be.

High atop the eastern Samaria slopes, the team navigates through fields of *Adonis*, *Scabiosa* and *Atractylis* species among others before an enthusiastic cry comes from Ori’s direction. He has found what we have come for, the rare Jericho garlic, *Allium hierochuntinum*. While no bigger than a ten cent piece its deep iridescent blue colour and intricate arrangement command attention among the surrounding flora. Not far on, a population of indigenous *Iris haynei* are scattered below a *Pinus halepensis* canopy and as far as the eye...
can see splashes of fleeting botanical colour brighten every landscape. Look south into the Negev Desert and you’ll find unique *Iris atrofusca* among blankets of *Anenome coronia* while to the north, wild *Paeonia mascula* are on offer to those lucky enough to visit the Mount Meron area at the right time (a thin window of opportunity in April). Even the journeys between destinations are spectacular this time of year with showy roadside flower displays such as the parasitic broomrapes, *Cistanche* sp. and *Orobanche* sp. (considered to be weeds in some commercial crops).

You could spend days exploring these areas and indeed I have, but there is more to this story than botanical sightseeing. In an ironic twist, the droves of curious tourists descending on the landscape each spring to appreciate the floral feast are in many ways inadvertently contributing to its decline.

So the Botanic Garden’s rare plant projects have multiple benefits. Not only do they preserve genetic diversity through propagation, production and seed security, but the gardens themselves become a gallery, showcasing the flower displays to the masses with no negative impact on the plants in their natural habitats.

Back in Jerusalem, the JBG is equipped with good facilities, though propagation is not altogether conventional, according to nursery manager Maya Abutbul who coordinates growing activities within the nursery. Taking a walk through one of the greenhouses, I learn from Maya that rather than mass production using tried and tested recipes in media, nutrition and water scheduling, here through necessity, each plant species is catered for individually and in small quantities. This is a challenge in itself, however it is further complicated by the fact that many of the plants propagated in the nursery are rare (not just from Israel but arriving from botanic gardens around the world) and as such, information on best practice propagation can be limited or non-existent.

With an unfortunate limitation on the availability of versatile composted pine bark as a medium, it falls to Maya and the team to experiment with blends of peat, coir, sand, scoria and perlite to achieve air-filled porosity and water holding capacity to accommodate the various plant species. In stark contrast to modern production nurseries, indigenous soils are also often incorporated into these media blends, particularly when propagating *Quercus* sp. to utilise mycorrhizal relationships beneficial to germination and plant health.

As we continue among growing benches, I am told of the fine tuning of nutrition, lighting and irrigation that continues throughout plants’ lives within the nursery and beyond. As you may expect in the challenging environment of Jerusalem’s harsh and variable climate, not all stories have a happy ending though fortunately the stories of success far outweigh those of failure.

It is valuable work indeed and though a world away from my beloved Adelaide, it is my hope that the investigative spirit of the propagators of the JBG inspires you all back home. Whether you are nursery operator or passionate gardener, remember with technology the world of today is a small place. If you are having trouble cracking the propagation technique for that Mediterranean curio you just have to have, help from experts in the plant’s motherland is likely only a few clicks of the keyboard away.

Happy tinkering!

*See page 7 for some background information about Dan.*
Dan Austin had this to say about himself:

_A born and bred South Australian my horticultural roots stem from growing up working on a family fruit block in the Riverland. I trained as a horticulture apprentice at the Urrbrae Education Centre before eventually branching into lecturing in the field for TAFE SA. While I maintain networks within South Australia, lecturing intermittently and maintaining a place on the board for the International Plant Propagators Society Australia, I am somewhat of a wandering horticulturalist of late. I am currently based at the Jerusalem Botanic Gardens in Israel as one of two Australian horticulture scholars. This is a placement that comes after a string of overseas horticultural projects including in Honiara, Solomon Islands and Kigoma, Tanzania. It’s a big wide horticultural world and before the year is out I hope to be able to provide the Mediterranean Garden Society botanical articles from Oman and Turkey as well._

**Succulents, cacti and the younger generation**

**Wendy Chapman (Cumberland Park)**

Succulents and cacti – these are the mainstays of traditional Mediterranean style gardens. In my view, you probably either love them or you don’t. Many of my feelings about them have been shaped by seeing them used in gardens in a country town in SA where I grew up and where it was very hot, dry and windy in summer and many people did not water their gardens very much. Not necessarily a good introduction to the beauty that succulents and cacti, used well, can bring in good garden design. But I am learning to like them more as I see them used really well in some people’s gardens. I have even planted one in my own garden recently – we will see how long it is before I decide I don’t really like it there and pull it out!

Anyway, it seems like my views on this topic are out of step with many younger people. I say this because for a while now, I have observed that in the garden centre where I work, young people, say under the age of thirty, love succulents. The succulents walk out the door, used well, can bring in good garden design. But I am learning to like them more as I see them used really well in some people’s gardens. I have even planted one in my own garden recently – we will see how long it is before I decide I don’t really like it there and pull it out!

Many people want to grow them in pots rather than in the garden and this seems to reflect the number of younger people who are living in rented homes. You can buy succulents already potted up in a wide (and I mean wide) range of containers such as bottles, jars, cans, terrariums and small concrete pots at various markets and other places where “hipsters” hang out. Many of these containers don’t have drainage holes in them so it requires great care not to mention skill, to not kill them by over watering – a feat most of our customers have not managed and hence why many of them are there to purchase new plants and try again. A young man recently had a very serious conversation with me about the best way to water his new gift of a narrow necked glass flagon which was planted with succulents – he was most keen to not wet the glass inside and to not over water them. We worked out a couple of different options and I wished him luck.

Some of the small cacti are attractive to young people – including very young people of primary school age. They are fascinated by their weird and wonderful shapes, spines and colours. And again, they are seen as being easy care especially by the parents and grandparents who buy them for the very young people, although I have had one little fellow who used his own pocket money to buy a small cactus recently.

Another observation I offer on this topic – most of the young people who come into the garden centre looking for succulents do not spend much (if any) time looking at any other plants, except perhaps vegetables and herb seedlings. Not sure what this says about their interest in plants and gardens – maybe nothing and maybe everything.

So have you observed something similar to me on this topic? Do you think there is anything in this observation of a trend that those of us interested in Mediterranean style gardening can use to promote and support this garden style?

If you would like to comment on this article by Wendy or any other author please send her or him an email with a copy to the Editors. We’ll print your comments in the next issue of the Newsletter.
Tupelo - a nursery to be celebrated
Text: Kate Chattaway. Photographs: Rosey Boehm

As the nursery industry in SA struggles to survive, one family business still going strong is Tupelo Grove Nursery at Mylor in the Adelaide Hills. It is the work and home of horticulturalists Ian and Robyn Powell, who are enthusiastic supporters of the MGS.

This is a business born of a joint passion for plants suitable for the SA climate. Ian and Robyn grow a very wide range of plants, so many in fact that Ian says it's not worth putting out a list of plants because there are over 2,000, it is always changing and if he was doing lists he wouldn't be focused on his real job of nurturing plants.

And it is all about plants. There are no fancy tools to buy, no knick knacks to tempt you. The plants are cultivated outdoors and are therefore well hardened off. "The labelling is comprehensive and accurate and they give good honest advice" - according to one garden designer whose opinion I sought. Added to that the mature plants can be seen growing to perfection in the garden which surrounds the nursery.

Drought tolerant salvias, which can provide almost a year round floral display, are a particular specialty at Tupelo. In fact they have their own chance hybrid called Meigan's Magic, which occurred 10 years ago in the Powell's garden. It is named after Ian and Robyn's granddaughter Meigan and arose as a young seedling under a *Salvia leucantha* which is assumed to be one of the parents. It makes a 1.4m rounded shrub bearing white flowers and a rich navy blue calyces from spring until the first frosts. It apparently looks good planted with similar salvias like Waverly and Phyllis' Fancy. Alternatively it makes an attractive background to lower growing penstemons and lavender.

A love of botany runs in the Powell family. Ian's father Brian Powell was a passionate botanist, who developed an experimental orchard to cultivate quandongs at Quorn as well as creating the Powell Gardens – a two and a half acre garden displaying the native plants of the Quorn region. And Ian is still mining the horticultural treasures to be found in his mother Fay's garden at Quorn. He is currently propagating a wonderful resilient statice he found there. Ian says: "It is called *Limonium peregrinum*, it has a bright lolly pink coloured flower and when cut and taken inside, it retains full colour for at least a couple of years. My mum was growing it in the garden at Endilloe, Quorn on badly saline water. She found it growing in yet another dry land garden near Buckaringa, to the north of Quorn."
Ian has a network of rare plant contacts which enables Tupelo to sell unusual Mediterranean plants which are hard to find elsewhere in South Australia or even in other states. I suggested to Ian that Tupelo might propagate plants introduced by Lambleys in Victoria but he said it was rather the other way round and Lambleys was sourcing unusual plants from Tupelo.

Robyn is a regular at MGS meetings and a committee member, valued for her expertise in the horticulture industry. She supplies plants when MGS members open their gates under the Open Garden scheme. This aims to encourage garden visitors to make climate compatible plant choices in their own gardens. MGS receives a generous percentage of the proceeds from the plant sale at these openings. Robyn is seen regularly at the ABC Car Park Capers and a myriad of other plant fairs in and around Adelaide where she sells plants and doles out advice. Tupelo plants are also supplied to a number of wholesale and retail nursery outlets.

It is attention to detail which is one of the secrets of successfully growing healthy plants as can be seen with a look behind the scenes with Ian. Each group of plants in the propagating area at the back of the nursery is labelled with all the details associated with that group of plants coded on a label which shows everything from when the plant was first potted up and later divided or potted on, to the dates when fertilizer was applied. So that if any plants fail to thrive, there is a good record of their history to help indicate the cause.

Ian and Robyn purchased the property in 1980 when there was virtually no garden at all. Most of the large trees in the garden were planted around 1986. There was a shortage of tree cover after two ‘Ash Wednesday’ fires in the area making the property extremely vulnerable to strong winds. Choices were made in terms of bushfire readiness, so highly flammable trees like eucalyptus, casuarina and some conifers were removed. These were replaced with deciduous trees around the house to absorb the radiant heat from any future bushfires.

With bushfires in mind, the garden has been planned to take account of this significant factor. Mediterranean plants like small perennials and shrubs would be ideal if it was not for the fact that they are also likely to be quite flammable. So the further away from the house, the drier the garden becomes with the plants from the Mediterranean climate regions located in those areas.

The couple have a serious commitment to sustainability with an extensive fruit and vegetable garden growing everything from beans, onions, radishes and turnips to passion fruit, apples and loquats as well as an extensive range of herbs. Beyond this they aim to produce their own electricity. They have 20 solar panels to generate electricity for the house and they have now been using solar for almost 30 years. Ian is also now setting up 10kw of
solar panels to take the nursery “off the grid” by feeding electricity from the panels into a bank of batteries. This
together with 3kw generated from the shed roof should supply up to 90 per cent of the nursery’s needs.

As for maintaining their own garden, that is a bit of a tall order for Ian and Robyn when they are already so heavily
committed to running the nursery business. As Robyn said in her notes when she opened the garden recently for
the Open Garden Scheme: “We do not employ any help in the garden and our jobs require us to work 7 days a
week at some times of the year. This means that we cannot always get things like pruning and pest and weed
control done when it should be done. So like many people, our garden reflects our life in many ways. But we do
what we can and most importantly we try to enjoy what we do.”

And what do this dedicated couple do when they manage to have some time off from propagating, planting and
pruning in their nursery – they just go and look at other gardens of course.

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**Designing With Succulents**

*Debra Lee Baldwin*

**Book Review by Kate Chattaway**

Succulents grow readily in this climate. We all know that, but how do you design
with them?

While there are many books on how to grow succulents, making them work in a
design which has succulents as its main focus is another thing altogether. Books on the subject are like hen’s teeth.

That was precisely what I was looking for and I had to go to California to find it.
Well not literally, but the book by Debra Lee Baldwin *Designing with Succulents*
is published in the States. It brings together the work of fifty US designers and
home gardeners who have either made the use of succulents their stock in trade
or discovered how to use succulents in their own domestic gardens.

Given that I was gardening in the most challenging of conditions in full sun, in
rock-filled soil on the Hills Face Zone and with nothing but seasonal rain for
water, I was completely sold on the idea of using succulents. What had survived
in this garden were aeoniums. How to move forward was the question?

I sent for this book in the hope that I could get some inspiration and a bit of hand-holding to give me confidence to
plan and plant. I ordered the book from the UK’s Book Depository (which doesn’t charge for delivery) and waited in
agitated anticipation. Now having received the book I can tell you that it is everything I hoped for. Of course
Australia has its own succulent guru Attila Kapitany and I had enjoyed a talk by Attila a few years ago courtesy of
the Australian Society of Garden Designers. I remember him explaining that the rosette of a succulent like an
echeveria was as stunning as a rose flower to his mind and lasted a great deal longer. He waxed lyrical about the
beauty and great versatility of succulents.

Debra Lee Baldwin’s book takes that appreciation to a new level. It is a feast of ideas about how to use succulents
in every situation from formal gardens to rocky hillsides, whether it is reworking an existing garden or coming up
with an entirely new planting scheme. There are design ideas for paths, borders, slopes and containers. The
textural and architectural possibilities of succulents are explored through lush photographs and clear text. The
gardens featured mainly focus on the hot dry landscape of southern California, and therefore particularly applicable
to South Australia. Debra also deals with using succulents in colder climes, like Canada for instance – although I
have to say that struggling to grow succulents in Canada must be a classic case of not embracing your own climate.

The author herself gardens on what she refers to as an “inhospitable half acre” in the southern Californian foothills.
Doesn’t that sound familiar to the South Australian experience? She is both a designer and a hands on gardener,
dealing with temperatures ranging in her own garden from below freezing to 43°C. That experience shines through
as she offers hundreds of recommendations for a succulent “plant palette” together with a wide range of drought
tolerant companion plants to set gardeners on the way to visualize, cultivate and care for their own succulent
creation.

*Designing with Succulents* is published by Timberpress and costs US$29.95 if ordered from the publisher.

*The 2017 international MGS Annual General Meeting is to be hosted by the Californian MGS*
**A Garden in the Making**

**Nieve Smyth (Perth, WA)**

It’s a year since we moved into our house, and having run out of space in the postage stamp sized back yard (even with going vertical!) it is time for the front - I have a majestic 6 metres x 15 metres to play with. I ‘re-gifted’ the horrible dracaenas that were planted out along the house walls and ripped out the scale ridden *Agonis flexuosa* ‘Nana’, so apart from the pair of *Prunus cerasifera* ‘Nigra’ that I like I have a blank canvas to play with.

Even being in ‘the trade’ as a landscape designer, I have found this garden very difficult! After numerous discussions with my husband, we came to a compromise whereby he got his wish for a 1.8m limestone wall surrounding the area and I got mine to have a gravel garden – effectively a walled courtyard. Then the fun began - getting approval for the wall from the local council. I have had to amend the design a couple of times to keep the powers that be happy, e.g. the design for infill has to have at least 50% visibility “for security reasons so you can see if there is anybody in your front garden”. Hmmmmm.

I am an avid (ok obsessive) plants person and I’ve been buying and hoarding plants, much to my husband’s chagrin (cries of “why don’t you wait until you are ready to plant before you buy”). I have amassed a collection of various euphorbias, leucadendrons (Burgundy Sunset and Purple Haze), nepetas, santolinas etc.

Luckily for me I have Scott Robinson from Zephyranthes nursery and Carlini Holland at Verdiore Plants to purchase from as a lot of the plants are not available from mainstream nurseries thanks to the very strict Western Australian quarantine. I must admit I pine for some of the plants I used to get from Tupelo Grove and Lambleys, but it is fun to source unusual lovelies.

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**Aeonium arborescens**

**Kate Chattaway (Torrens Park)**

*Aeonium arborescens* flowered prolifically this winter in our garden, reaching their peak in July with a mass of acid yellow flower panicles held above a sea of bright green rosettes of leaves. These succulents come from the Canary Islands with some also found on the island of Madeira and on mainland Africa in Morocco and part of East Africa.

Bees and butterflies descended en masse to enjoy this floral abundance on the hillside overlooking the city. This is the season when aeoniums are at their best in contrast to February when their shiny rosettes shrink to almost nothing and all you seem to be left with is a tangled mass of thick sinuous brown stems.

However this supreme adaptation to the climate should be celebrated. It enables *Aeonium arborescens* to tolerate the fierce heat of summer and to survive. The plant revives in autumn to flower in mid winter and live up to the origin of its name in Greek which is “aionos” meaning ageless. Although aeoniums are easy to grow, they are not frost hardy and flower best in full sun.

What continues to astonish me about a garden is that you can walk past it in a hurry, see something wrong, stop to set it right, and emerge an hour or two later breathless, contented, and wondering what on earth happened.

*Dorothy Gilman*
A Gardener’s Centrefold

Clianthus formosus  Sturt’s desert pea

Photographs taken at Roxby Downs, South Australia by David Zwar

Mediterranean Garden Society SA Branch  Spring 2015  12
Travelling Gardeners’ Centrefold

Eucalyptus papuana (ghost gum) at Karlwekarlwe (Devils Marbles)
Northern Territory

Sunset at Lake Hart (see page18)
Native plants from around Australia are brought together as an exhuberant display in late winter and early to mid spring at Stokes Bay Bush Garden on Kangaroo Island (KI).

It is well worth searching out this garden which is close to a remote beach on the north coast of the island. Here you can marvel at the extraordinary variety of leaf shapes, flowers and seeds that have evolved in the southern hemisphere.

This three hectare garden was started in the late ‘80s after owners Carol and John Stanton were inspired by a trip to Western Australia and returned to KI determined to recreate what they had seen in the bush from isopogons to hakeas and adenanthos to darwinias. It has 1,100 named plants: over 150 KI species; 16 endemic plants; over 75 different banksias, more than 45 different dryandras, and over 145 types of grevilleas. At this time of year visitors can also enjoy the subtle but fleeting Australian native orchids in flower, many of which are naturally occurring on the property.

My favourites in the garden were the dryandras with their bright yellow shaving-brush flowers that belong to the banksia family and are only found in the south west corner of Western Australia. They are difficult to grow elsewhere because they dislike humidity but the dry climate in South Australia is perfect. With rainfall averaging 500mm a year in Stokes Bay, the plants more or less have to look after themselves once they have become established. The garden is fenced to keep out animals which might disturb the plants. John has lately spotted the odd small holes in the ground made by bandicoots which he is happy to tolerate. But he draws the line at the echidnas, those spiny miniature bulldozers that will uproot plants as they plough their way through the flower beds and apparently even climb up electrified fences.

Entry is $8 a head and visitors are provided with booklets to identify all the plants numbered in the garden. When we first visited, it was cold and started to rain – off putting even for garden tragics like ourselves. John offered us umbrellas but it was not a day to linger so he kindly allowed us to return later in the week without further charge.

The garden has been open to the public for 20 years and is arguably one of the best gardens in Australia to see so many different native species in one place.

*Open August to May – check for times:
Tel: 8559 2244; Mobile: 0458 571 037
Sandwiched between Georgia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Turkey and Nagorno Karabagh, Armenia was the place we chose to go looking for interesting wild plants in flower, in June this year. Though not on the Mediterranean Sea, Armenia is home to many Mediterranean species. There were plants to satisfy all, even the most specialised of us. I have never seen wild flowers covering the landscape as extensively as here. We were fortunate to have an English-speaking Armenian botanist, Dr Anna Asatryan, as our guide.

East of the capital, Yerevan, we visited the magnificent Greco-Roman colonnaded temple of Garni built around 77 AD and the 12th century Geghard monastery. Birdwatchers among us were thrilled to see hoopoes, bee eaters and the occasional golden eagle soaring above the monastery.

Also accessible within a day from Yerevan was an area at the snow line beneath the summit of Mount Aragats, a volcanic mountain and the highest within modern day Armenia, which was a plant hunter’s dream, covered with colchicums, pulsatilla, muscari, gentiana and much more, all in flower.

Further afield, we went north and glimpsed rare irises through the coach windows but our coach driver couldn’t stop because of the bendy road, resulting in near mutiny among the passengers. An outstanding botanising opportunity was near Jajur Pass, where wet meadows were filled with *Anemone narcissiflora* subsp. *fasciculata* and various *Orchis dactylorhiza*. There were so many anemones that, from a distance, they looked as if a giant had been sprinkling icing sugar on the hillsides.

In that area we stayed at a former Intourist hotel in Dilijan. Bizarrely, the lifts stopped at half-landings between the floors. Stocking up for our picnic we visited a Georgian bakery one morning in the small town of Aparan. Bakers
A diverd head first into a large gas-fired amphora-shaped oven to slap raw dough onto the inside and extract the delicious loaves a few minutes later.

On the east side of Lake Sevan, we admired the candle-like flowers of eremurus (foxtail lily) on the cliffs beside the road, and saw the occasional fisherman hauling in a pot of crayfish from the sadly depleted lake. On the Artanish peninsula we saw, in addition to a further wide choice of plants, such as helianthemum, origanum and salvias, many sizeable iguanas sunning themselves on the bare rocks beside the water. A little further south were fields of wild poppies, cornflowers and buttercups creating great swathes of red, blue and yellow.

The southernmost place we visited was Goris, from where one can see the mountains which skirt the border with Iran. We had two nights in a pleasant privately owned hotel there and visited Tatev monastery and the mountains beyond by funicular. This was another beautiful day with masses and masses of flowers through which we climbed and walked. Heaven!

There were other treats such as a lunch in a cave restaurant, storks on their nests on the top of telegraph poles, encounters with the friendly and hospitable people.

For more photos see:  

Heather Martin  
hma@clara.net  
www.medpag.org
Carrick Hill Museum and Exhibition
Kate Chattaway

Carrick Hill is set to be the venue for the new Australian Gardening Museum and is staging its first gardening exhibition, showcasing the extraordinary Old Mole collection of historic garden tools and implements. The exhibition is on until November 29.

Trevor Nottle, our own branch chair and international authority on old roses, cottage gardens and Mediterranean gardening, has written a book entitled *Endless Pleasure* exploring the Old Mole collection and sharing his enthusiasm for collecting garden paraphernalia. *Endless Pleasure* is published at the end of September and will be reviewed in the next edition of the newsletter.

Carrick Hill owner Ursula Hayward was a formidable gardener, who brought the bounty of the garden into her home to enhance its beauty. She and her husband Bill Hayward also acquired many floral still-life paintings as part of their valuable art collection. So it is fitting that Carrick Hill should take on this new role, with the support of the Australian Garden History Society.

A building to house the museum has yet to be constructed but in the meantime, Carrick Hill’s director Richard Heathcote is keen to generate enthusiasm for the project with a series of exhibitions. Two upper rooms of the beautiful sandstone manor house have been devoted to showcasing just some of more than 750 objects which form part of the Old Mole collection with an ingenious artificial hedge with windows created to set the scene.

Armidale couple Richard Bird and his wife spent nearly two decades scouring junk shops, auctions and fairs hunting down historic English and Australian garden tools from spades to shears and wheelbarrows to watering cans. In the process Richard aka Old Mole became an expert in heritage garden tools. For many years he traded in antique and period tools which he brought back to their former glory with the help of an expert blacksmith.

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The Land Where Lemons Grow.
Helena Attlee (Particular Books, 2014)
Reviewed by Ines Parker

David and I are planning to attend the international MGS meeting in Ischia (Italy) this October. We have been seduced by the pre and post conference tours, and when I learnt that Helena Attlee will be the tour guide on one of these, I decided to buy and read her book ‘The Land Where Lemons Grow’.

The gentle title and Italianate design of the cover give little indication of the breadth and depth of this book’s content!

Attlee presents an interesting history of the introduction of citrus to Italy. Initially citrus trees were seen as aesthetic or curious pot plants for the wealthy, but eventually became a significant commercial crop in various regions, notably in Sicily, where citrus trees were introduced by invading Arabs in the 9th century. Sicilian citrus crops became such a lucrative export commodity that they were monopolised and controlled by the island’s Mafia, until replaced by an even more lucrative ‘crop’.

On the mainland in the southern province of Calabria, citrus in the form of ‘citron’ was introduced by immigrant Jews in about AD 70. Strangely shaped and consisting mainly of thick skin and pith with little flesh or juice, the citron nevertheless remains a prized product to this day, perfect specimens being painstakingly harvested in August and exported all over the world for an important Jewish festival.

Most commercial citrus plantings were/are in southern Italy with its warm climate, but the Italians are not easily daunted by inconvenient climate or geography. Not only have they built villages and terraced gardens clinging to cliff faces or perched on hill tops, but they have also built enormous limonaie (lemon houses) in which to grow citrus trees in the north, where the cold winters would kill the trees if grown outside. The limonaie are labouriously boarded up in winter (heated when necessary) and labouriously opened up for summer.

A wonderful mix of travelogue, history and botany, comprehensively researched and well written, this book is very readable, with touches of humour and personal experience that add to the pleasure.
Ines Parker       Photographs: David Parker

“Olive Pink” – a strange colour scheme? Not that, but the name of a very unusual and talented woman! The Australian Arid Regions Native Flora Reserve, now the Olive Pink Botanic Garden, was founded in 1956 as a consequence of Olive’s enthusiastic lobbying. The guide book describes her as “An unconventional anthropologist, an outspoken advocate for Aboriginal rights, a botanical artist and a woman ahead of her time in promoting the cultivation of Australia’s native plants. Miss Pink was the Garden’s Honorary Curator from 1956 until her death in 1975, aged 91. She lived in a small tin hut (in the garden of forty-nine acres) and worked with Warlpiri gardeners. Opened to the public in 1985, the Garden has 600 central Australian plants, including 33 that are rare or threatened.”

When we visited the garden on a warm, sunny August day, it was busy with families enjoying the garden and its organically inclined cafe. It was also busy with birds, notably spotted bowerbirds, one of which was the proud owner of a wonderful bower decorated with assorted white objects and green native fruit.

The plantings are mostly grouped according to genus or purpose e.g., mallee walk, wattle walk, bushfood garden. The adjacent steep ridge which can be climbed and a walked, has aboriginal significance and naturally occurring local plants.

We found it really rewarding to see many of the trees and shrubs we had passed in our travels planted in this garden and named. The garden is a treasure trove of central Australian plants flourishing in their natural environment and readily accessible to visitors.

This salt lake 220km north of Port August is a favourite over night camping place for us. Winter rain had added some water to the central part of the lake and encouraged numerous wild-flowers to germinate and/or flower. Among those we recognised were poached egg daisies (Myriocephalus stuartii), yellow billybuttons (Calocephalus knappii), longtails (Ptilotus polystachyus), hopbush, cassias and acacias (A.aneura and we think A. coriacea). Apart from the vegetation it is the colours of the lake, the ochre sand, the gnarled, thick barked tree trunks, the serenity of the region and the spectacular sunsets that draw us back to this beautiful rest stop. Don’t miss it when travelling along the Stuart Highway!

Lake Hart
David Parker

Olive Pink Botanic Garden
Alice Springs

Lake Hart
David Parker

Olive Pink Botanic Garden
Alice Springs

Text: Ines Parker       Photographs: David Parker

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Acacia jennerae

Ptilotus obovatus (silvertails) one of 23 species of ptilotus described in central Australia.

Ptilotus obovatus (silvertails) one of 23 species of ptilotus described in central Australia.

We found it really rewarding to see many of the trees and shrubs we had passed in our travels planted in this garden and named. The garden is a treasure trove of central Australian plants flourishing in their natural environment and readily accessible to visitors.
Visit Kookaburra Ridge
the garden of Anne-Marie and Ray Holland
on Sunday 22 November 2015
from 2.00 to 4.00 pm
136 Ridge Road, Summertown

We bought our three acre property 10 years ago. The property is about 40 years old and was once a market garden. We have spent the last few years renovating the house and slowly building a garden in our style - and still in progress. This is a gardener’s garden, not a designer’s garden, learning from our mistakes along the way, what works and what doesn’t, but enjoying the process.

There is a small orchard, a vegetable garden, a native Australian garden, a bank of proteas and leucadendrons, a fern walk, as well as a semi-formal garden around the house. Carey Gully stone has been used for most of the retaining walls and steps, which we have built ourselves. There are also a few messy areas which need lots of work.

The majority of the property is on a slope, but easily accessible, so please wear appropriate footwear.

**Directions:** From the city you can travel via the freeway, Magill or Greenhill Roads to Summertown. Of these the easiest is to travel east (up) along Greenhill Road. Ridge Road is the first street on your left after you pass bus stop 19. Our property is 1.3 km along Ridge Road from the Greenhill Road turnoff. We will put a red cone at one of the two driveways. There is limited parking on the property, however plenty of parking exists nearby on Ridge Road.

Afternoon tea will be provided.

We look forward to welcoming you to Kookaburra Ridge.

Anne-Marie and Ray

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Edible plant profile: Yacón
Hugh Hunkin (Diggers Garden Shop)

Yacón (pronounced yuck-ON, not like ‘bacon’) is a South American root crop that grows well in Mediterranean conditions. It will survive our Mediterranean summers with minimal water, though it does best with extra watering, like most vegetables. The plant can reach around 2m high and up to a metre wide, but grows fairly sparsely. Tubers are harvested anytime from late autumn to early spring after the plant has gone into dormancy. Their carbohydrate is in the form of inulin, which is indigestible (no energy is obtained from it) but very good for promoting gut health. This makes the tuber suitable for diabetics or those on a low-carb diet. It is slightly sweet to taste, and crunchy like an apple, and can be eaten cooked or raw. If you are growing Yacón already, now is a good time to divide plants by removing growing rhizomes from around the edge of the patch and replanting.

Yacon produces both red growing rhizomes (for replanting) and rounded brown storage tubers (for eating)

Plants are available to purchase from Diggers Garden Shop, Botanic Garden of Adelaide.

**Gossypium australe or G. bickii?**
David Parker

Noted at Karlwe-karwe (see page 13), this desert rose is probably *G. australe* given its hairy leaves and deep purple throat. While *G. bickii* also has hairy leaves it is described as having a “red throat spot”.

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Aloes on Kangaroo Island
Kate Chattaway

Driving around Kangaroo Island late in August we happened upon many drifts of aloes growing by the roadside. I checked on the weed identification website for Kangaroo Island and they don’t seem to be noted as a particular problem. Although they looked attractive with their orange candle like flower spikes, they undoubtedly have weed potential - ours is an ideal climate in South Australia for them to spread.

With time to spare before boarding the ferry at Penneshaw, we took a short drive up the hill away from the town. Beside a paddock full of sheep we saw aloes growing literally as a great succulent hedge. It looked extraordinary. But I wonder if this is a wise choice for what is a fragile environment like Kangaroo Island with so many unique species.

For me the choice was easy as I have long been fascinated with my *Isopogon formosus* and have played around before with the dainty but prickly stiff foliage that looks vaguely prehistoric to me. The flower heads usually defeat me though, so I steeled myself to come up with something that would capture the intriguing beauty of this plant. As a repeat pattern I have also used artistic license to suggest the swirling pattern of the cone. No doubt this is an example of a Fibonacci sequence in nature. I added in *Isopogon drummondii* to illustrate the complete contrast in foliage and petal shape.

Although *I. formosus* is native to West Australia, South Australia’s *I. ceratophyllus* is a smaller yellow version that in many respects is quite similar and I hope to track down some plants for my garden now that I am inspired.

A note of caution to those who visit my garden and seek out my isopogon. You may well imagine after seeing the design that it is a large grand specimen but unfortunately not so. Some years ago an echium popped up in front of it and as echiums do, it grew rapidly into quite a large shrub completely overshadowing the shy retiring isopogon. Last spring I caught a glimpse of a beautiful rose, cone flower and immediately decided the echium must go so that I could enjoy that wonderful plant. Unfortunately the plant still looks like it is cowering under something with twisted stems and branches going every which way. I am sure I should attempt pruning but even the old cones are beautiful; perhaps I will wait and take cuttings once the current season’s growth is hardened. Or perhaps some knowledgeable soul will come along and set me right. I don’t mind - I have my design.

“A garden – your garden, my garden, any garden however large or small, however grandiose or meagre – is a means of escape from man’s grey life into God’s green world. It represents the fulfilment of a dream scaled down to the size of one’s pocket and the scope of one’s creative horizons. And gardeners are dreamers with muddy hands. Through their labours they unearth beauty out of chaos. They sow love in the rubble of a backyards and they reap their reward in a single flow-er. Time is non-existent.”

From Knee Deep In Sunshine by Charles Madox-Brown
A Summer of English Gardens
Maureen Highet (Harrogate)

My husband and I recently spent five weeks touring around England and Wales visiting many of the gardens I have had on my ‘bucket list’ for years.

One of the highlights was being able to stay at Sissinghurst! We stayed in a delightful cottage a couple of hundred yards from the main gate of Sissinghurst Castle. The owner of the cottage, Linda Clifford had grown up on the Sissinghurst Estate and knew Vita Sackville-West very well. In fact, Vita had named Linda, when her parents were struggling to decide upon a name. Linda had many stories to tell of her childhood at Sissinghurst and of her grandfather, who managed Vita’s farmland for many years. Early morning, after breakfast, we were able to wander down a pretty English lane to the gardens and were given a ‘pass’ key to the gate of Sissinghurst Castle in case we returned to the accommodation after closing. We spent four days staying in this delightful accommodation.

I also visited Great Dixter, the beautiful garden and fascinating home of the late Christopher Lloyd. It was mid-June and the roses had not quite opened but the wildflower meadow was an absolute picture and it was torture not to be able to purchase plants from the nursery.

Another favourite was Coton Manor owned by Ian and Susie Pasley-Tyler. I have been reading Susie Pasley-Tyler’s blog for years and wasn’t disappointed when I visited this beautiful garden. Flamingos could be seen walking across the lawns and again, walking the mown paths of the wildflower meadow on an English summer’s afternoon was just bliss. On the day of my visit, Helen Dillon - famous Irish gardening guru, was giving a talk in Coton Manor’s barn. If only I had known prior to my visit. What an interesting afternoon that would have been!

A special day was spent visiting Beth Chatto’s garden. I especially enjoyed the ‘Dry Garden’ A wonderful picture of Mediterranean plantings.

Also, when we visited Hidcote I was fascinated by the potting shed used by Lawrence Johnston, Hidcote’s designer and creator.

The garden at East Ruston Old Vicarage was well worth the 6 hour round trip. Established on the Norfolk coast by Alan Gray & Graham Robeson who have created 32 acres of garden ‘rooms’! Amazing structures and colour combinations with ‘rooms’ divided by meticulously trimmed hedges.

We were lucky to visit many more gardens on our travels. Just a wrong turnoff on a busy road could lead to a quiet lane and a private garden open for the summer. It was a wonderful English summer visiting one of the best things about England …… the English garden.
Tortured Pine Plaza
Anne Hinkley-Tyler (Mt.Gambier)

Our rainwater tanks are not yet full. At this time of the year (sans drought years) we normally have overflowing tanks. The average rainfall for August in Mount Gambier is 95.8mm, we have recorded 54.6 mm*. There was no rain when we were recently away for two weeks and when we returned our garlic crop was wilting and new autumn plantings required watering. We had to dig down about 10cm to find dampness in the soil.

We are grateful that when we were starting our garden during the last drought we made the decision to change our garden plan from English style to Mediterranean style. Now that our garden is about eight years old a lot of plants that survived the previous drought are established. We hope for the farmers, winegrowers, garden lovers and everyone’s wellbeing there will be spring rains.

Our latest project (I use the royal ‘we’, as Ian has been doing most of the work whilst I have been away at work) is Tortured Pine Plaza. The name came from seeing a pine tree in a paddock that had been tortured into shape by fierce winds. Our ‘plaza’ is also influenced by the pruning of plants we witnessed in Turkey and now we have another influence, South Korea, where we visited in August. Pines are ubiquitous in our region, given the forestry industry, and we felt Pinus radiata warranted a special signature element in the garden. We are ‘torturing’ the pine (by the use of wires, buckets of bricks and heavy pruning.

Tortured Pine Plaza is starting to look pleasing now spring is here with the bulbs flowering. Our dilemma is making it look pleasing for the rest of the year. We do not like to water in that area. All the plants have to be able to survive with minimal watering, despite the Pinus radiata and the various eucalyptus surrounding the plaza that take up most of the rainfall. Cosmos has previously worked well for summer and we have decided to use it again this year. The truth really is that cosmos has decided we will use her this year, as she went to seed last season. Tortured Pine Plaza is a work in progress and still needs more plants, as there are too many bare patches. It is my job to propagate and I have a fair amount of success because I select the easiest plants. I am being challenged at the moment and sometimes I survey how much I need to do, look at all the cuttings slowly dying in their buckets and just go inside and read about beautiful gardens and make lists for Ian.

There are two Acer negundo in our garden. After planting these we were visiting Adelaide’s botanic garden and, with strained necks, admiring a tree that stood about 25 metres tall. It was an Acer negundo and we both went ‘oops, maybe a bit large but the grandchildren can worry about that’. The blooms that start mid August and last to mid spring are like fringes on a flamenco scarf that dance in the wind. Everyone who visits at this time comments on how pretty the trees are. In researching the tree we read it is now classified as a weed along waterways in temperate zones in Australia. We hope we have not added to Australia’s weed problem.

*source Elders Weather
South Australian Branch of the Mediterranean Garden Society
Your Garden in Autumn 2015

For a number of years SAMGS has collected information about plants that have or have not been successful in members’ gardens. The Committee has decided to re-activate the scheme and is asking all members to participate. Each season members will be emailed a survey form that can be completed simply; selected responses will be published in the newsletter. Your responses will be useful as we work to create a new chapter (Colour all the year round) for the reprint of our Branch Resource Book.

Two members have responded to our third survey and I thank them for that. But what happened to the 140 plus who did not?

All of the information provided by respondents is reproduced below.

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<td>Eremophila racemosa x glabra</td>
<td>Eremophila racemosa x glabra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shrub</td>
<td>Rosmarinus ‘Tuscan Blue’</td>
<td>Rosmarinus ‘Tuscan Blue’</td>
<td>Rosmarinus ‘Tuscan Blue’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shrub</td>
<td>Montanoa hibiscifolia</td>
<td>Chamaemelum japonica</td>
<td>Philotheca myoporoides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>climber</td>
<td>Hardenbergia ‘Edna Walling Snow White’</td>
<td>Hardenbergia ‘Edna Walling Snow White’</td>
<td>Hardenbergia ‘Edna Walling Snow White’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>climber</td>
<td>Plumbago</td>
<td>Hardenbergia violacea</td>
<td>Hardenbergia violacea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>climber</td>
<td>Passiflora mollissima</td>
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</tr>
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</table>
As always thanks to our contributors, particularly friends overseas. Items will be due in mid November for the summer issue, so please consider an article even a short one on a subject that interests you.

Pulsatilla albana (see page 15)