



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

# Open Gardens South Australia Welcomes you to Topsy Hill

Saturday 20th & Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2021

Topsy Hill is such an idyllic location and our family is very grateful to live in such a special spot. Over a 15-year time period, Margaret Burrell, with help from Pam Hailstone, transformed a sandy hill with a few pine trees and a peppercorn tree into a beautiful Mediterranean-inspired terraced garden with a maze of exciting smaller and almost secret gardens, all linked by paths. This was Margaret and her husband Christopher's weekend home, which they used for entertaining – and what a stunning place to entertain!

The last time the 2-acre Topsy Hill garden was open to the public as part of Open Gardens South Australia was in March 2015 - and anyone who has visited the garden before will see several changes that we have made since we moved in.



Matilda & I picking our first vintage of Topsy Hill

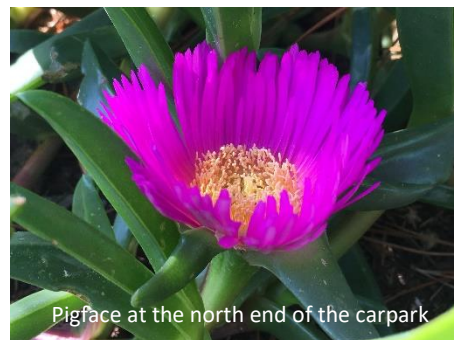
Our little family moved to Topsy Hill in February 2016 when our daughter was only eight months old. We began the gradual process of fine-tuning the garden into one that requires a little less maintenance and lower water consumption, as well as converting part of the garden close to the house to a kitchen garden with herbs and some vegetables for us to use in our cooking. There were already several established fruit trees in the garden including quince, apricot, peach, lemons, kumquat, pomegranate and fig - and of course a vineyard. Since moving in, we have also added a few more lemon trees, another fig and a lime tree.

Nature and the environment are both things that are very important to my family, as well as our head gardener Marian McDuire. My grandmother Dr Barbara Hardy AO was one of the founders of Nature Foundation and I am now on the foundation's board so we are very conscious of water usage and have reduced the water consumption of the garden by around 25%. We have done this by grouping plants into areas of higher and lower water requirements or by moving plants to areas where they are better suited. There were a lot of roses that were dotted around the garden and we have moved these into three main areas: around the north lawn, the Topsy garden and the smoke tree garden.



Clivias are abundant

We have also moved several other plants to areas where they are better suited, such as the irises that were on an exposed bank in the carpark and struggling. We moved them to a more sheltered area under the Chinese elm where they are now thriving. We then replaced them with Pigface, which is flourishing in this position. We also moved a number of Clivias that were under the south pines and struggling to survive to the washbowl (after removing the invasive Arum lilies that were growing there).



Pigface at the north end of the carpark

**Open Gardens South Australia Inc:** is a not for profit organisation opening private gardens to the general public. The purpose of Open Gardens SA is to educate and promote the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening in South Australia and to build strong public support for the development of gardens.

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

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Margaret liked to combine some native plants with the exotics so we already had a range of natives dotted around the garden and have also added a few more. I think some natives also work well for topiary so we have a number of little Melaleuca nessie balls along the west bank and also a more recent addition the Westringia balls in the bed between the arbour and the south lawn.



After we had bought the property, we walked around Topsy Hill with Margaret and she explained that she had overplanted the garden and was then planning to thin things out later. When we moved in, it was time for a lot of plants to be removed so we had the opportunity to choose what to keep and what to let go. It was amazing how many plants there were and, in some cases, we would remove one lot of plants and then other plant would appear in their place, having been dormant for many years. One area this happened was in the Topsy rose garden where the sedums were starting to compete with the roses - so we removed them and the following spring a carpet of bluebells appeared (which we hadn't seen before).

Another recent change that has been a project of my husband Richard, was removing the roses from the arbour so that it's now just wisteria. The roses and wisteria had started competing with each other and in the roses' attempt to survive it had been throwing long shoots into the air while the arms down closer to the ground had started looking very sick. We decided that in the end the wisteria would win and the roses were another target of the thin-out. There is one rose left at the west end of the arbour, which will remain until the wisteria reaches that part. The arbour only features one wisteria plant so it is amazing how large they can grow! We have also widened the paving under the arbour so it's wide enough to have a table and chairs, and we can now use this area now for private events, weddings and our Wine Club lunches.

There are a couple of areas of the garden that are still very much a work in progress, one of these being the garden above the fruit trees. This section was previously all flowering plants, but the area is sandy and exposed, getting very hot in summer and requiring a lot of water. We plan to move to natives here and have started by planting one of my favourite trees: the Corymbia citriodora. Once established, we'll plant native grasses underneath this tree. This area should then develop into a striking avenue of tall smooth white trunks, which will contrast against the tall grass understory.

The other area that requires some attention is the east bank between the house and the vineyard. This steep bank gets very hot in summer and because of the slope it doesn't retain much water. The plan here is to terrace the area into a number of flat garden beds that can be used for herbs and vegetables, as well as one or two paved areas where we can sit and watch the hills light up in the evenings as the sun sets behind us – it really is an idyllic spot!

Many people say that a garden is always growing and developing, and this is certainly the case at Topsy Hill. We hope you have enjoyed discovering this special place and hope to see you back in the future.

All the best,

Bec Hardy

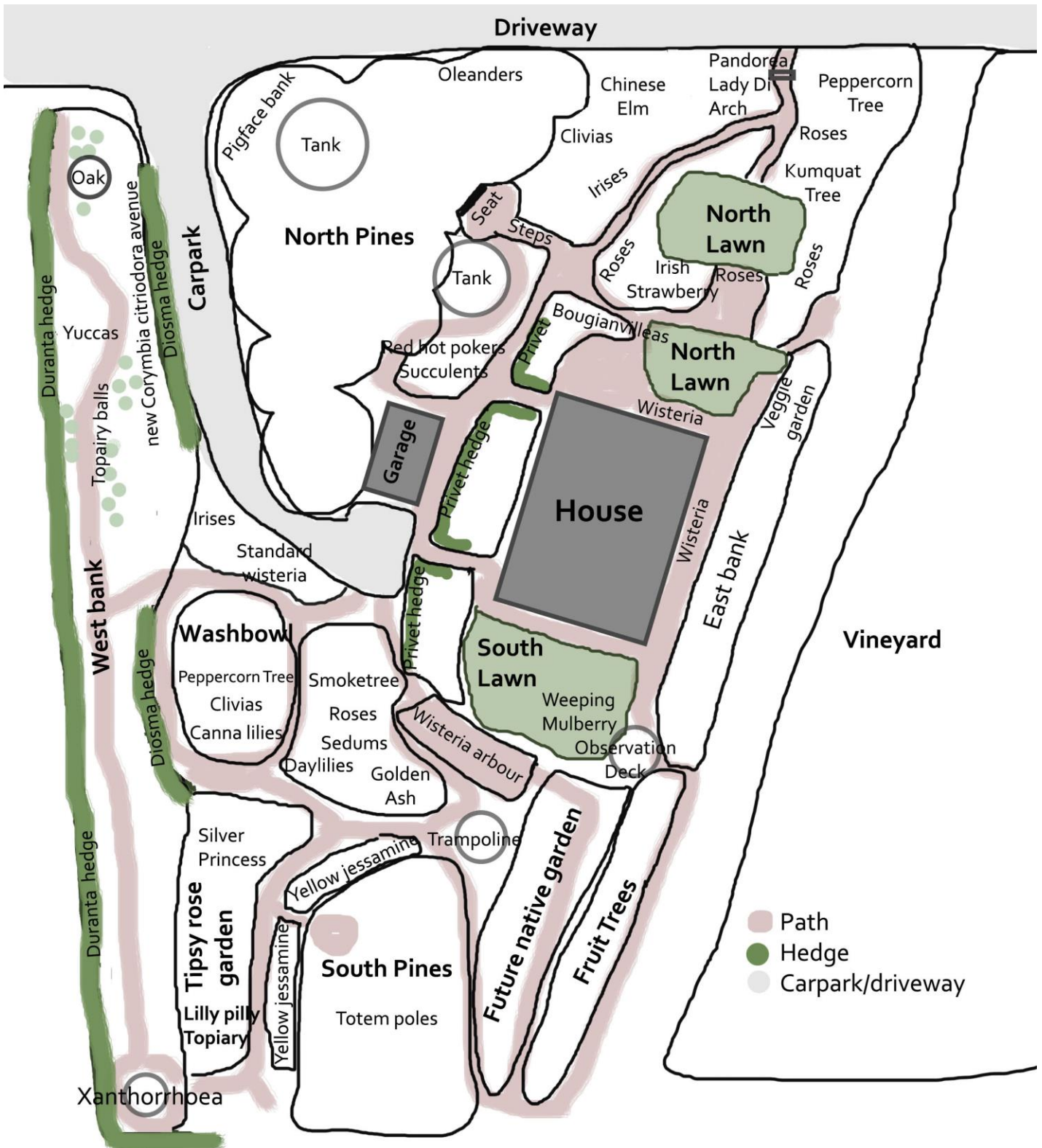




# TIPSY HILL GARDEN MAP

We hope you enjoy exploring the garden and discovering the interesting array of plants while taking in the amazing views over the Mount Lofty Ranges. Topsy Hill is an ideal spot for a wedding or private function and you are welcome to get in touch if you are interested in holding an event here. Our wine club members are invited to a number of exclusive events at Topsy Hill throughout the year and if you would like to know more about our wine club you are welcome to visit our website.

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