



OPEN GARDENS

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Gardener's Handbook

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Welcome to the Open Garden Scheme for the Northern Territory

The Scheme is privileged to be assisting you in opening your garden.

We aim to provide you with the knowledge and expertise to make your opening successful and enjoyable for both you and your visitors. You have already done most of our work for us by creating a special garden.

The following information should answer any questions you have, but please don't hesitate to contact Open Gardens NT if you require further information.

Many thanks for participating in the Open Gardens scheme for the Northern Territory and best wishes for a successful open day. We hope the weather is wonderful, your plants behave and that you and your visitors enjoy the day immensely.

Happy Gardening

David Jan

Open Gardens NT Chairperson

info@opengardensnt.org.au

How Open Gardens NT Operates

Open Gardens NT (OGNT) is a not for profit, volunteer run organisation founded in 2018 which has been formed to share and promote the joys and benefits of gardens and gardening. It owes its success to the hard work and dedication of the many volunteers who made up the nationally-run Australian Open Garden Scheme that ran in the Territory from 1987 to 2014 and the volunteers who have now launched the Open Gardens Scheme for the Northern Territory (NT).

Our NT Open Gardens season currently runs during the Dry Season, April to October, when the weather is cooler and more predictable, and the threat of cyclones or heavy rain is minimal. This is also the most pleasant time for garden visits with lower humidity and of course it is our peak tourism season.

Gardens are opened once during the season for a weekend, both Saturday and Sunday from 10.00am until 4.00pm. The scheme endeavours to open a variety of gardens of different sizes and interests both urban and rural. Depending on availability gardens can be opened in other seasons.

Mission Statement

Open Gardens NT's mission is to promote the knowledge and pleasure of gardens and gardening across the Northern Territory by opening inspiring private gardens to the public.

The objects and purposes of the association are as follows:

- To facilitate the opening of gardens in the Northern Territory for public viewing.
- To promote the enjoyment and benefits of gardening and gardens.
- To encourage community engagement in gardening by promoting horticultural education, garden design, ecological sustainability and other activities.
- To support community and charity groups through providing opportunities for fundraising and profile building.
- To cooperate with, and to participate in activities with, other organisations which have similar objectives.

Garden Owners and their Volunteer Helpers

The enormous input from the garden owners and their many helpers forms the basis of Open Gardens NT. Without our garden owners and their volunteers, Open Gardens NT would not exist. Successful opens usually have the strong support from a charity or community organisation and often extended family and friends. They assist the garden owner by coordinating and running the refreshments stall, other activities such as raffles and plant stalls, erecting signage on the day and any other small tasks that need doing.

Open Gardens NT Committee & Contact Information

Volunteer Committee

Chairperson	David Jan
Vice Chairperson	Joanne Tilbrook
Treasurer	Lyn Barlow
Secretary & Public Officer	Angela Pattison
Committee Members/Volunteers	Sue Dibbs, Karen O'Dwyer, Jody Crofts, Neville Hunt, Jenny Jan, Rachelle Szabason, Helen Fischer.

Email: info@opengardensnt.org.au

Open Gardens NT is a completely volunteer based organisation. The volunteer committee share the various roles which support the Open Gardens. Including finances, marketing, volunteering on the entry table, maintaining the equipment, coordinating the volunteers and many other tasks that ensure the scheme is a success.

Volunteer Garden Selectors

The first contact that garden owners have with Open Gardens NT is generally through one of our garden selectors who seek out, visit, assess and then report on the gardens. There is a significant interest in opening gardens and this process is started early in the previous season.

Garden Host Committee Contact

A committee member will be assigned to be the Committee Contact for you as you prepare for your open. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have questions that you cannot find answered here in the handbook or if you want to talk something over as you plan and prepare your open.

Entry Table Volunteers

The entry table is run by a roster of OGNT volunteers. We always aim to have a minimum of two volunteers present. Shifts are broken into morning shift and afternoon shift so you will have several different volunteers sharing this responsibility.

Funding, Entry Fees and Donations

Entry fees (Adults \$7) are split 50:50 between the garden owners and OGNT, this is an increase for Garden Host who under the national scheme only received 35% of the entry fees.

The garden owner's share is distributed to the owner and/or directed to a charity/community organisation of their choice. We understand the extra costs that are sometimes incurred to open a garden to the public, however, OGNT strongly encourages all garden owners to support a charity at their open in some way. Funds raised through ancillary fundraising activities such as cake and coffee, plant or craft stalls and raffles are retained entirely by the garden owner or their charity/community organisation.

OGNT is funded via its share of the entry fees and seeks additional funding from community grants. OGNT is a volunteer organisation so the main costs are insurance, marketing, printing, general administration expenses and website expenses.

At the end of the season, surplus OGNT funds are returned to the community through donations and sponsorship to garden initiatives through Community Garden Grants.

Community Garden Grants

Open Gardens NT is committed to encouraging gardening and improving our environment. One of the ways we achieve this is by funding community-based garden projects. Each year, funds surplus to our operational costs are returned at the end of the season to the community in the form of grants.

In past years, NT Open Gardens, as part of Open Gardens Australia, provided Community Garden Grants to numerous Northern Territory organisations, including:

- The National Trust
- Friends of the Darwin Hospice
- Christchurch Cathedral
- OLSH School, Alice Springs
- St Johns College Tree Planting Project
- Henbury Special School
- Fred's Pass Reserve
- Lakeside Drive Community Garden
- The Mulch Pit Community Garden, Nightcliff

Commercial activities

Commercial Businesses at Open Gardens

We acknowledge that some gardeners may already run a commercial enterprise from their home or see Open Gardens as an opportunity to promote their business. As visitors may be able to access your garden at other times, we ask that we make it worth their while to visit during an Open Garden by running workshops or other “value adds” on the weekend. Also, the Gardeners share of the gate takings are donated in entirety to their community group/charity. If you do run a commercial enterprise at home, please discuss with the Selectors and your Committee Contact .

Commercial Stallholders

Garden owners may like to offer the chance for additional commercial/private stalls to operate at their open to value add to their open garden, for example a plant or craft stall. We ask that if a commercial/private stall is held at the open garden a donation is given by the stallholder to the nominated charity/community group. This can be either a percentage of takings or a flat rate similar to what would be charged at a market to hold a stall. Please discuss how you will manage this with your Committee Contact.

Property for Sale

If your property is for sale while the Open Garden is on, we require any "for sale" signs are removed from the road or property. We are happy for you to put details of the sale and contact details on the bottom of your garden notes.

What Open Gardens NT Provide

Profile

- Gardens open under Open Gardens NT are associated with a well-run, respected not for profit organisation, which in the past has returned significant funds to the community.
- We have an established network of regular visitors and generous volunteers.

Network

- Support from the Open Gardens NT committee.
- Support from Open Gardens NT volunteers.
- Invitation to the end of season celebration.

Insurance

- Public Liability Insurance.
- Voluntary Workers Cover.

Garden Hosts Season Free Entry Pass and Supplier Discounts

- Free entry for two for every garden for the year you hold your open.

Garden Notes

- Assistance with editing of your garden notes for distribution on open days, if required.
- Assistance arranging printing if you are unable to arrange this yourself through your local MLA.

Charity Kit for Tea and Coffee

- Tea and coffee making kit to assist your charity/community organisation in raising funds and keep rubbish to a minimum. See Appendix A for details.

Signage

- Distinctive and familiar directional road signs featuring the Open Gardens NT logo – as many as required.
- Tear drop banners x two, to be erected on the day at the entrance of the garden.
- A-Frames x two, to be erected on the day on the road outside the garden and on the nearest intersection.
- Vinyl rectangular banner and pull up banner (if required).
- Disable parking sign and witches' hats.
- Note - All signage is delivered to the Garden Owner prior to the Open and it is the Garden Owner's responsibility to erect the signage prior to the Open.

Entry Table Volunteers, Set Up & Equipment

- OGNT volunteers will set up and pack up the entry gazebo, table & chairs.
- OGNT provides all volunteers to man the entry table.
- Collection of entry fee, EFTPOS preferred. Payments can also be taken for items that may be sold at your open, e.g plants, refreshments etc. Any payments taken are given to the owner at the end of the day

Benefits to Charities and Local Communities

- Open Gardens NT's capacity to attract visitors from beyond your immediate locality assists local communities in raising funds and raising the profile for the charity.
- Local nurseries and other businesses also benefit from this visitor influx and inspired gardeners.
- Garden-related projects in your community can apply for Open Gardens NT Community Garden Grants.

Promotion and Marketing

Successful Open Gardens promotion is most effectively carried out on many levels:

- Electronically through the Open Gardens NT website, Facebook and Instagram pages and email updates.
- Regionally, through radio, television community announcements and print media including ABC Radio Saturday Morning Gardening Talkback, NT News, Deckchair Cinema and Off the Leash.
- Locally, with the assistance of the garden owner and Charity/community Organisation including Word of Mouth, work networks, personal and charity Facebook etc.
- Road Signage – carefully placed signage has a significant impact on visitor numbers.

ABC Radio

ABC Radio is a supporter of Open Gardens NT. Announcements of open gardens may be made during the week on FM 105.7 and in the *Talkback Gardener* segment on Saturday morning. Where possible, on-site or on-air interviews with ABC Radio are arranged with garden owners before the opening, this is not guaranteed but they try to get to as many as time allows. If you are not comfortable taking on the radio one of our committee members can call in for you on the morning of your open.

Local newspapers

If a media organisation contacts you for an interview please make the most of the opportunity – be confident, positive and enthusiastic when discussing your garden. What you say has the power to attract visitors, so give your garden the best 'plug' it can get.

Be willing to have your photograph taken – and if you are uncomfortable with that, try to think of another 'angle' for the photographer. Perhaps a pet, a child or grandchild, or someone from your charity could be used to give interest to the photograph.

*Please understand that publicity in newspapers and on radio **cannot be guaranteed**. Space and radio time are limited, so if a story or photograph about your garden opening does not appear, please don't be disappointed.*

Photographs

An Open Gardens volunteer will visit your garden before the season begins to take photos. We understand your garden might not be quite ready but we are mindful of this and can be selective in what is photographed. This assists us in having a range of photos to be used across the brochure, website and social media platforms. You are also welcome to pass on any photos you have which you think will be useful. More photos will be taken on the weekend of your open to post on social media, these usually capture the garden with visitors.

Open Gardens NT Website - www.opengardensnt.org.au

The OGNT website contains information about the Scheme as well as the full calendar of openings. Garden notes and a Google Map location on the website also helps our visitors find your property.

Facebook & Instagram - @opengardendsnt

The Open Gardens NT Facebook and Instagram page provides dynamic points of contact for people to like and share the scheme and associated events. Like, share and comment on the Event and posts on your own Facebook timeline and ask your friends and Charity/community group to do the same. Keep an eye out for comments and reactions, the more you interact by replying and liking the posts about your garden the better the reach will be including answering questions or liking reviews of your garden.

Email Reminders

In the week before your garden opening, we send out an email reminder to our mailing list. This list is not available for any other purpose and will not be supplied to any other person or organisation. Assisting in the promotion by forwarding on this reminder to your own email contacts and your charity/community group will help spread the word.

*****Note*****

All these are important ways to let people know about your garden opening and anything you can do to assist with getting the word out about your opening will add to the number of visitors to your garden.

Ask your family, friends, workmates and your charity volunteers to spread the word about your Open by forwarding OGNT emails and especially liking, commenting and sharing the Facebook and Instagram posts (this really makes a significant difference). Comments and likes made on the weekend of your open on Facebook/Instagram are also a great.

It all adds up.

What Garden Owners Provide

Their garden and their expertise

- A commitment to prepare the garden for opening on scheduled days.
- Ensuring the garden is safe and any hazards are identified.
- Preparing garden notes for distribution on open days and organising printing at your local MLA's office.
- A willingness to meet and talk to visitors.
- A space to set up the entry table and gazebo
- Plant sales (optional).
- Other optional "Value Adds" on your Open Garden weekend – these could include talks, guided tours, cuttings, tastings, workshops, children activities.

Publicity

- Planning locations and affixing road signs (as supplied) on open days and removing at the end of the weekend. OGNT volunteers will often assist with the taking down of the signs.
- Assisting with the promotion of their garden to their network, their charity's network and the general community.
- Talking to local media contacts in consultation with Open Gardens NT.

Charity/Community Organisation space

- A space for your chosen charity/community organisation to set up a fundraising activity (tea, coffee & cake stall, plant stall, raffle or anything else you or the charity may think off).
- Access to toilet facilities for your volunteers (guests in an emergency).

Preparing for your Open Days

Garden Notes

A 'hand-out' of information about your garden is an important part of the Open Garden visitor experience. A personal description of how your garden developed adds human interest to the visit and means you don't have to be in all parts of your garden at the same time to answer visitors' queries. **Maximum of 1 A4 double sided.**

Garden notes add much to the enjoyment and insight of visitors, who can read them as they walk around and take them home as a reminder of their visit. They can also be fun for you to write and are an opportunity for you to tell your story and what you love about your garden.

You could include some of the following information in your garden notes:

- The inspiration for your garden
- Historical aspects and how the garden was developed
- Information about the design and (if relevant) who designed it
- A plan or 'mud map' – especially useful and popular with large gardens, highlighting significant plants
- Planting themes and colour schemes
- Plant names (common and botanic) of noteworthy plants – especially if in flower.
- Problems and how you have overcome them
- How you maintain your garden (fertiliser, mulch, pest control etc)
- What you enjoy most about your garden
- Any plans for the future
- The nursery from which visitors may source plants (and you can ask them to display a poster)
- A mention of any charity or community group you are supporting

Producing your garden notes

Please send them to your Committee Contact at least two weeks before your opening. You can email them to us in Word, or as a PDF if you have prepared your own layout. Once checked and edited if required, we ask you contact your local MLA's office for printing, they are usually happy to do this. We recommend you print 150 - 200 copies.

QR Code

Your Garden Notes will be uploaded to the Open Gardens website in advance of your opening, so people can read them online before visiting your garden. A QR code will be provided at the gate for guest to access your garden notes on the day as well.

Samples of other Garden Notes can be found attached to the past garden events on the website.

Signage

Road signage – Important as many visitors tell us this is why they came

Road signage helps visitors locate your garden; it also has the potential to attract additional visitors who may not already know about your open, including your surrounding neighbours, so it is important promotion of your open which requires a little thought and preparation. These signs should be prominently displayed at major intersections and roads leading to your garden.

You will receive many large Open Gardens NT direction signs with left, right and straight-ahead arrows. There will be green wire ties already attached that make it easy to secure by twisting together around street signs or power poles firmly.

Planning the placement of road signage

It is well worth planning signage locations well in advance. Many visitors come to opens because they saw the road signs while out and about on the weekend. Print out a map of your surrounding area and mark on where you think the best locations are. Drive around your neighbourhood to see if there are appropriate poles at these locations. Please do not attach on traffic light poles. Place signs well before intersections, at eye height if possible, to give drivers plenty of time to slow down to turn if necessary. Use the straight-ahead arrows if the road is long as this reassures drivers they are still going the right way.

Remember: your visitors may come from any direction and they don't know where you live. It is also good to think which way the rural folk will visit a town garden and how the townies will approach a rural garden.

If you plan and mark out the locations of the signage on a map this will assist whoever is collecting the signage after the open.

If you require additional signs, please let us know asap.

Putting up the signs

We recommend signs are erected on Friday evening when there is not much traffic around and the weather is a little cooler. Saturday morning will be busy, and this means this job is already done.

Attach the signs at both the top and bottom of the sign, twist the ties securely to prevent the signs turning around in the wind. Even if it is not windy when you erect the signs this may not be the case later in the weekend. Attach at eye height if possible.

Road signage can be left out overnight on Saturday evening and then taken down after the open on Sunday afternoon.

A-Frames

There are two A-Frames with arrows, one which is placed right at the entry on the driveway or across the road from the driveway and the second on the closet intersection. These are to be put up just before the open begins and are to be brought in overnight on Saturday evening.

Tear drop banners

There are two tear drop banners which can be placed at the entry as can be seen from a distance. These are to be brought in overnight on Saturday evening.

Vinyl Banner and Pull Up Banner

If you have space, we have additional banners which can be used – a rectangle banner which can be tied to the fence and a pull up banner with it's own support (but can blow around if windy).

Please note that all Open Gardens NT signs and any literature which includes the Open Gardens NT logo must only be used at your garden on your scheduled Open Gardens NT open days. For legal and insurance reasons, the Open Gardens NT logo must not be used at any other time or at any other garden.

All signage is collected on the Sunday after the end of the Open so it can be delivered to the next gardener. OGNT volunteers will assist packing up the entry table at your garden including signage at the front of your garden. They **may** be able to assist in the collection of road signage and this is when a map of their locations is very useful.

Disabled Parking Sign

This comes with two witches' hats and is to be placed beside the driveway with clear access to the verge if possible.

Publicity

The success of the publicity is greatly increased if you help publicise your event by sharing marketing with your own personal, work, family and local networks to ensure the maximum number of people know about your open. Encourage your Charity to also do this as the more people who attend the greater the fundraising. Share and comment on Facebook posts and events, forward emails, print and post the flyers up around your community. We have found the most successful Open Gardens have been ones where the Gardeners along with their charity have really supported the marketing.

Display Photographs

Visitors enjoy seeing photos of your garden's development and those that show it in different seasons, so you might like to set up a display of photos on a board, in an album, or placed around the garden at points of interest. You may also wish to just show some plants or harvests you have captured of your garden which may not be possible to see on the weekend. Our visitors are curious gardeners and will enjoy anything you wish to display.

Plant Labelling

To make identification easier and to save you answering the same questions repeatedly, please consider labelling plants of special interest with their botanic and common names. A simple tag is all that is needed, and it will save many repetitive questions and answers. It should be clearly written and able to be read at a distance without visitors having to venture into the garden bed. Discreetly done, it won't detract from the beauty and enjoyment of the garden.

Labels can be put on cardboard and stuck into the ground, tied on trees, or just placed carefully amongst foliage. We discourage laminating labels unless the signs will be used again.

Plant Stalls and Other Activities – Value Adds

Visitors enjoy other activities associated with open days and many garden owners have raffles, teas and stalls. **The proceeds of these activities are retained in their entirety by the garden owner or their charity.** Many enterprising owners raise quite large amounts from their stalls selling crafts, produce, etc and these are very popular with visitors. You may also like to have live music in the garden or displays and sales of local artists' work. Speciality workshops, tours or talks on a particular aspects or interest in your garden. Children's activities or garden quizzes are also enjoyed by our young visitors and are worth thinking about. Your Committee Contact is happy to discuss these ideas with you. These can also be advertised prior if you let us know.

Visitors will often want to buy plants they have seen growing in your garden. Plant stalls are very popular, but they do need to be of a high standard with well-grown and clearly labelled specimens. If these are close to the Entry Table our volunteers can assist with the sales if required.

OGNT encourages garden owners, charities and anyone involved with value adds to take steps to minimise the amount of waste generated on the day. This can be done by swapping single use items for ones that are more durable.

You may decide that opening your garden is enough to handle so please don't feel pressured to undertake more. But if you do, remember that visitors are above all coming to enjoy your garden, so it's important that any ancillary activities don't detract from it.

Tea, Coffee, Cakes

Tea, coffee, cakes are now a permanent part of opens and many of our visitors meet with friends and families at opens to enjoy this aspect along with the walk around the garden. We suggest baking between 10-15 cakes for the weekend. A backup plan if you end up being busy on the Saturday and require more for cakes for the Sunday is advised. Offering gluten and dairy free options is always appreciated but not necessary if this is not easy for you. Savouries are also appreciated. Good coffee is always a hit and OGNT has added coffee plungers into the Charity Kit.

Charity Kit

Open gardens have put together a kit to make it easier for charities to run the tea and coffee stall.

The kit includes – ceramic mugs and plates, coffee plungers, re-usable water cups, teaspoons, cake forks, cake servers, tongs, cake covers, napkin holder, two washing up tubs, a large water cooler and an urn. See Appendix A for a picture. This will be dropped off to you in two black crates the week prior to your open with the signage.

You or your charity will need to provide all the consumables like – tea, coffee, sugar, milk, napkins, ice for cold water, cakes, biscuits and savouries. Consideration needs to be given to the importance of ensuring that the cups, plates and utensils are appropriately cleaned between use when deciding to use the kit in lieu of disposables.

Please ensure all items in the kit are returned clean and accounted for, ready for the next garden owner to use.

Alcohol Sales

Please note that if you are planning on serving or selling wine (or any other alcohol) at your opening, you will need to obtain a liquor licence. OGNT does not assist with this.

Free Passes

All garden owners will receive a season pass for two for the year in which they are open. Occasionally Free Passes are issued for sponsors or promotional activities.

Access

Many of our visitors are elderly or may be disabled in some way. Many are long-term supporters of Open Gardens and value the opportunity to visit gardens. It would be appreciated if you would allow them to drive close to the garden entrance to either park or to drop off and pick up passengers. It's a good idea anyway to discourage parking too close to your gate to enable clear visibility of the entry table, signage and for any delivery or drop-off purposes. OGNT has a 'Disabled Parking' sign which can be placed near your gate. Please encourage your volunteers to park well away from the entrance if possible, to keep it clear for your Open Gardens NT visitors.

Toilets

If you have indicated that a toilet is available, please ensure it is clearly signposted. Toilets should be either outdoor facilities or ones where access does not involve entry to the house. For security reasons, we do not recommend indoor toilets be made available – except in emergencies!

Finances

OGNT provides the Entry Table float and EFTPOS machine. This is handled by our volunteers over the weekend. Your charity will need to arrange their own float for the refreshments stall. OGNT is happy to take EFTPOS payments for plants and refreshments and pay the Garden Owner in cash at the end of the day.

The entry fees will be banked early in the week after the open and a small EFTPOS fee will be taken out. You will be issued with a Payment Details form with details of the attendance at your open, the amount that was raised and your share of the entry fees. This form gives the OGNT Treasurer instructions where the funds are to be distributed to. Once the form is complete and returned to OGNT we will transfer the money to your nominated accounts in 5-10 business days.

If you are making a donation to a tax-deductible charity, we encourage you to contact the charity directly for a tax-deductible receipt as this can be claimed through your tax return. This is to be done directly with the charity.

To track the overall impact in the community of the funds that are raised if you could supply us with the amounts raised by your other fundraising efforts for your charity, we would appreciate the feedback. This helps us understand the impact on the wider community the scheme is having and can assist in future grant applications.

Insurance Cover

Insurance is one of Open Garden NT's major expenses. We arrange Public Liability insurance cover for all gardens on their designated open days.

Beware of approaches from non-Open Gardens NT groups, tours, etc. as these may not have adequate insurance cover. If you do decide to open your garden for anyone other than Open Gardens NT, we recommend that you exercise caution and satisfy yourself that they have taken out cover for your public liability, not just their own. The payment of any consideration to you or a third party – whether a fee, gift, donation or token – will in many cases result in the cancellation of public liability cover under domestic policies.

Personal Accident Cover for Voluntary Workers is also provided on your open days. The Voluntary Workers insurance covers workers aged 18 to 80, and includes cover for any unpaid helpers, including any you invite to run a stall for a charity. The liability cover indemnifies the garden owner against claims in the event of an accident.

Safety in the Garden

Inviting the general public into your garden for a fee brings with it a duty of care to your visitors to ensure that you are providing them with a safe environment to enjoy. As a result, it's important that you carry out a risk assessment to identify any hazards that could pose a risk to your visitors or volunteers.

Some things to check include:

- Pools: does your property comply with all relevant requirements for fencing of pools? You will not be covered by any insurance if your garden is non-compliant.
- Steps, uneven ground and exposed roots: While no one expects perfectly flat surfaces, you need to be aware of any uneven, slippery areas or tripping hazards, and either fix them or rope them off before you open.
- Equipment and tools: for example, have all hoses and rakes been put away so they do not become trip hazards?
- Can you secure any outbuildings, machinery or animals?

Before your opening, ensure that any potentially dangerous areas of the garden are roped off and that all garden tools and equipment are safely stowed away. On your open days, take normal precautions to make your home secure.

The liability policy covers the standard activities on open days, including the provision of food and other stalls. The policy does not automatically extend to include activities associated with farm or domestic vehicles, animals (pony rides, etc), jumping castles and other hired amusements, model train rides or power tools.

If you are contemplating any activity of this nature, or if you need any further information on our insurance cover, please contact the Open Gardens NT Chairperson.

On your open days, if you become aware of any incident – however minor – that may result in a claim, whether any claim has been made against you or not, please take the names and addresses of the people involved and notify Open Gardens NT immediately.

Secure your house

Take precautions to make your home secure. Close windows and blinds. Lock doors and give keys only to a small number of trusted family and assistants. Or ensure volunteers are placed to only allow access to toilets (in an emergency or for volunteers).

Your Pets

Consider the impact of the opening on your domestic pets and make suitable arrangements for them. It's not recommended to have your dog/s around the garden during visiting hours, but if you choose to have them participate please be mindful that your visitors may not feel as comfortable with your dog as you do. Keep your dog with you as much as possible.

Neighbouring Properties

It is good for neighbourly relations to let your neighbours know you are hosting an Open Garden and alert them to the increase in traffic and parking that will occur as a result of your visitors. If you would like to let your neighbours pop into your Open Garden for free let them know to identify themselves at the entry table.

Where there is insufficient parking on site, garden owners often arrange to use neighbouring properties for this purpose. This is perfectly acceptable, but our insurers need to be informed so you will need to supply the address of the property and the names of the owners. And if access to your garden is through land not owned by you, details of the owners of the land must also be supplied.

Timetable for your open day

To assist in your preparation, here is a suggested timetable. Your Committee Contact is always happy to answer any questions as well.

At the outset	<input type="checkbox"/> Touch base with your Committee Contact.
	<input type="checkbox"/> OGNT will visit to photograph your garden
	<input type="checkbox"/> Start a list of jobs you need and want to get done, prioritise the most important
	<input type="checkbox"/> Do a safety check and risk assessment of the garden and identify hazards to be removed or mitigated
	<input type="checkbox"/> Consider how parking and garden access will be managed
	<input type="checkbox"/> Undertake any replanting or additions to the garden well in advance so that plant health and overall maintenance is of a high quality
	<input type="checkbox"/> Consider how toilet access will be managed if one is being made available
	<input type="checkbox"/> Contact your charity or community group to discuss the level of their involvement including volunteers and promotion. Let them know about the tea and coffee kit (Appendix A).
1-2 months before your opening	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete major clean-ups, plantings, mulching to avoid that last-minute look and last-minute exhaustion.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Start organising your photos for your photo board if you are having one.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Start garden notes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify where you would like the OGNT Entry table to be located – either enough room for a 3m x 3m gazebo, if required, or a location that has shade between 10-4.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify where the refreshments stall will be set up. Also, where you will set up tables and chairs for you visitors to sit in the garden. Notice where the shade is during the day and ensure it is in shade for some of the day.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Touch base with your Charity/Community organisation to ensure they are locked in for helping.
4 weeks before your opening	<input type="checkbox"/> Finish garden notes and send to your Committee Contact. Print copies or organise to get printed at your local MLA's office.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Notify your immediate neighbours of your opening as a matter of courtesy. They might offer support, help on the day, free up parking space by keeping their vehicles off the road - or perhaps just disappear for the weekend! Let them know to come to the Open.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan your road signage on a map, let your coordinator know how many you will need – left hand turn, right hand turns and straight-ahead signs.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Touch base with your Committee Contact.
1-2 Weeks before your opening	<input type="checkbox"/> Prune shrubs if you wish to avoid that 'just clipped' look.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Touch base with your Charity/Community organisation to ensure everyone knows how the weekend is going to run.

	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety check of your garden. Any identified hazards need to be raised with the coordinator to help to decide how they will be identified or made safe.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Share marketing email and Facebook/Instagram event with your network, post flyers at your workplace or local shops.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Print garden notes.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Finish your photo board if you are having one
	<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare any garden signage you may want to have eg- plant identification or hazard identification.
The week before your opening	<input type="checkbox"/> Signage, entry gear and charity kit will be delivered to you.
2 days before your opening	<input type="checkbox"/> Mow and water your lawn for the last time. This minimises damage and reduces wear and tear.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure all garden tools are put away
	<input type="checkbox"/> Do a final safety check of the garden and put signage on any hazards that can't be removed.
The day before your opening	<input type="checkbox"/> Sweep the paths
	<input type="checkbox"/> Have your charity come and set up for the tea and coffee
	<input type="checkbox"/> Put up road signage
Saturday Morning of your opening	<input type="checkbox"/> Have a good breakfast and remember to keep hydrated as you will be talking all day to your visitors.
	<input type="checkbox"/> OGNT volunteers will arrive at 9am to set up the entry table and any last-minute help you may need.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Take a deep breath, smile and enjoy yourself! It's going to be a great weekend.
Saturday Evening	<input type="checkbox"/> Bring in A-Frames and tear drops. All directional road signage can stay in place overnight.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy the glow of your first day and get to bed early as Sunday morning is one of the busiest times.
Sunday Morning:	<input type="checkbox"/> Have another good breakfast!
	<input type="checkbox"/> Check the garden and do a quick tidy.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Put out the A-frames and tear drop banners.
	<input type="checkbox"/> OGNT volunteers will arrive at 9.30am to set up the entry table.
Sunday Afternoon	<input type="checkbox"/> Assist charity to pack up Tea and Coffee kit.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bring in road signs.
	<input type="checkbox"/> OGNT volunteers will pack up entry table, gazebo and signage at the front of the garden.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Breathe out, you made it. Sit back, enjoy your beautiful garden and bask in the adulation of all your garden admirers.
The week after your open	<input type="checkbox"/> Bask in the glow of all your hard work and enjoy your garden.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete the Payment Detail form when it is emailed to you, normally on the Wednesday. Return to OGNT via email or post.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Visitor sometimes post questions on Facebook regarding your open. If you can respond to any messages on Facebook.

COVID-19 PREPARATIONS

The Garden Host:

- If a charity or business is operating or selling goods during the Open Garden, remind them to follow the relevant Covid19 guidelines.

Open Garden volunteers will provide for ALL GARDENS:

- QR code to check in using the “The Territory Check In” phone application.
- Paper sign in sheets for people without electronic check in capacity. These will be stored securely, then shredded and composted to ensure privacy.
- Non-contact payment for entry fees-preferred method of payment.
- Hand sanitiser to be provided at the entry.
- Cleaning materials to be used as needed.
- Social distancing markers and reminder signs.
- Entry and exit signs at the front gate to support social distancing.

If the Covid19 requirements change before the scheduled Open Garden, your Garden-Host Committee Contact will be in touch to discuss any necessary changes to the plan.

Appendix A – The charity kit will be delivered in two crates. 2 x stainless steel coffee plungers, not pictured.



Please ensure crates are packed securely like above to prevent breakages in transit.