

Chris Pappin May 2017



I have been a member of the Strathalbyn Gardening Club since around 2013.

I grew up in the Colonel Light Gardens area of Adelaide with my parents and a younger brother and sister.

Both my maternal and paternal grand parents lived within walking distance of our home and it was through them I became interested in gardening at an early age.

They had grown up in the depression times and learned to be self sufficient on large suburban blocks.

I followed them about, pottering in the garden(s) and remember helping pick up Almonds and skin them, my Nan could make the best almond toffee and butter scotch.

Grandpa also grew roses and gerberas.

He showed me how to prune roses and let me take the gerberas into Nan to put into vases.

Grandma Nell grew show Dalilah's in her planting bed each year.

Some cuttings poking thru the odd fence came home too, in the name of economy. I love "shared" treasures still.

I feel they had lots of patience with all the grandchildren.

Our cousins were our play mates and even now we are still close, keeping touch by facebook and family 'gatherings.'

My dad grew roses, flocks and fruit trees. Mum was into the exotics, fabulous camellias in pots as well orchids and African violets.

I still can't grow African violets, always managed to kill them off.

Married and moved to an 18 acre property at Basket Range in the Adelaide Hills in the 70's to raise a family and in 2000 to an acre at Uraidla where we had a large collection of Camellias and were almost self sufficient in vegies and fruit trees.

In mid 2016 my husband and I sold and moved to our new garden at Strathalbyn.

We are busy re-planted with productive fruit and vegetables.

I can't fit in as much as I would like!!

We can't grow as much, but the fences may become hanging gardens of Strathalbyn.

I love the fellowship of gardening plus the fabulous friendships forged by people of many different backgrounds.

We are all brought together by our love of plants, birds, butterflies and the environment.

Working as a 'Friend of the Botanic Gardens at the Adelaide Hills Nursery' for many years was my community work with huge side benefits for me.

Learning from the best people who know about plants - professionals and the home enthusiast.

Being able to access knowledge and use the library was just great - I think we all learn from each other and had a great social life.

Many of us rallied to 'save' the gardens from financial and staff cuts - a committee was formed, a policy adopted, the public engaged.

Today many public workshops help at our three Botanic gardens; Adelaide Hills, Wittunga and Adelaide.

Birds are my other passion.

My husband loves photographing them.

We often work together, counting birds while he takes some fabulous photos.

Our garden at Uraidla provided some wonderful photos of Eastern Spinebills.

Our Strathalbyn garden has many grevilleas, which are bringing in lots of native honey eaters, parrots and some 'blow-ins.'

As Joan Patton from Birds SA used to say 'Birds don't read books', so they can be found outside of their range.

My husband and I hope we have passed our love of nature and the environment onto our children and friends.