Benalla Festival 2026

OPEN GARDENS

‘MONT ALTO’ 30 THOMAS ST NEIL AND LOIS SMITH

Neil and Lois have been in their Thomas Street home ‘Mont Alto’ for 23 years and in that time their garden has undergone many changes. From what was once an uninspiring space, the garden is now a delightful mix of formal and informal sections with a number of mature trees that anchor the space. In particular an 80-year-old Chinese Elm and two sculpted palm trees are impressive features.

Mass planting of Quercifolia Hydrangeas and informal beds of hellebores, clivias, agapanthus and perennials around the boundaries contrast with formal roses and box hedges on the north side of the garden.

Ornamental elements include an antique garden mirror and chaise lounge which complement the colours and shapes of the garden beds. The garden has changed significantly since 2018 when it was last opened and will provide returning visitors with a new experience.



‘HOLLAND PARK’ GEORGINA BURSTON AND DAVID ELFORD

270 EMU BRIDGE ROAD

The garden of ‘Holland Park’ has been designed to withstand the extremes of hot dry spells, heavy rains and deep frosts. Its survival is a testament to Georgina and David’s tenacity and their vision to create a balanced garden that sits comfortably within the landscape.

The garden incorporates linear areas and balanced spaces to maximise outdoor aspects and provide practical living areas that make allowance for hot days, northerly winds and the setting sun.

The garden is home to a mix of native and non-native plants with each playing a different role. The brilliant blue agapanthus were planted instead of constructing a low stone wall, a recently replanted grevillea hedge protects the house from dust and brings in the birdlife and the kikuyu lawn is not only cool in summer, it provides a wonderful firebreak.

Covering the pergola in the courtyard is a white wisteria and on the wall of the garage the single flush of cerise pink flowers of the climbing rose (Zephirin Drouhin) is spectacular in contrast to the sandstone walls. Visitors will also appreciate the structure and restraint of the garden.



136 ARUNDEL ST ADELE AND JIM MYCONAS

Two and a half years ago the garden at Arundel Street was a largely uninspiring combination of weeds, bindii, bare earth and the odd paperbark tree. Adele and Jim saw a blank canvas and got to work planting within a few weeks.

Now a Mediterranean mosaic of grasses, perennials, cottage and vegetables is complemented by a wash of Dookie pink coloured local gravel. The stones continue through the arrangement of the garden beside Jim's gabion wall and stone features, carefully organized to encourage plant growth.

The seating area has been embellished by an imported Moroccan water feature clad with tessellated green tiles.



‘REDDING HOUSE’ 9 MITCHELL ST DEE AND JOHN GRIFFIN

The garden of Benalla’s oldest surviving residence, ‘Redding House’, was commenced in 1995 by current owners, Dee and John Griffin. The garden features a formal front parterre garden with box and needle point ivy hedges propagated by Dee, topiaries and espaliered camellias and brick paving done by John.

At the rear is a walled garden and a distinctive window hedge of star jasmine. Climbing roses and plantings of antique perennials provide colourful surprises throughout the year.

One of the non-plant features of the garden is a fountain, the base of which is a 1850s-era horse trough from Mikado Park in Garfield North. The water flows from a stone figurine imported from France.



Every feature and plant has been carefully selected by Dee and John to delight visitors and create a restful, welcoming space for all to enjoy.

THANK YOU

These beautiful gardens have been opened to raise funds for Tomorrow Today, Benalla's independent community foundation. Thank you to the generous garden owners who have opened their gates this spring to support the foundation's work: Dee and John Griffin, Lois and Neil Smith, Richard and Sarah DeCrespigney and, George Burston and David Elford. Thanks also to Kathy Ellis-Ragg who assisted with the organisation of the event.

Thank you to the many local businesses and individuals who have donated goods and services for the raffle: Andrea Alexander, Aqua Door, Benalla Aquatic Centre, Benalla Cinema, Benalla Information Centre, Bill Bo Pop, Caz Turnbull, Charlisle Art, Cinderella Dry Cleaning, Coffee Merchant, Donohue Quality Meats, Free Spirited with Sonia, Hairdressing Lane, Millner-Watson Pharmacy, Mitre 10, Mulberry Lane Styling, Peter Davis Rural, Piccadilly Lane Antiques and Collectibles, Polished Agencies and Galleria, Benalla Post Office, Rambling Rose, Sharps Outdoor Equipment, Sportspower Benalla, Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program, Stolz Furniture and Homewares, Terry White Pharmacy.

About Tomorrow Today

Tomorrow Today was founded in 2002 and is now leading a 20-plus year initiative to improve the educational and life outcomes of Benalla's children, young people and families. Through more than 20 education support programs, 120 partnerships, and generous annual grant-giving, the foundation helps the whole community to thrive. Thank you for your support.

TOMORROW TODAY
Benalla. Stronger together

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