

Announcement - AGHS Photo Competition Winners

As part of the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of its establishment, the Australian Garden History Society organized an inaugural Garden History Photo Competition during 2020. Entries were to reflect the aims of the Australian Garden History Society (AGHS) and could range from a 'historical property or landscape' to garden history in the making:

to promote awareness and conservation of significant gardens & cultural landscapes

Participants were invited to submit one digital photograph only (in colour, black and white, sepia, etc) along with a brief description (up to 150 words) that described the subject and how it illustrated 'garden history', in one or more of the following categories:

- A. Garden view or cultural landscape.
- B. Still Life Composition.
- C. Gardener or Gardeners under COVID19.
- D. The Lawn, a special category for 2020, as part of the celebration of the proposed Australian Museum of Gardening (Carrick Hill, South Australia) exhibition "The Blade", scheduled to tour in Australia in 2020 and 2021.
- E. Garden History Imagined.

Entries were open to non-AGHS members and members alike. The photographs could be taken anywhere in the world! – The competition was not limited to 'Australian' garden history.

The Competition was the brainchild of Greg Johnson and Helen Page of the Australian Garden History Society, and prizes were sponsored by the AGHS ACT Riverina Monaro and Southern Highlands branches as well as individual members. The winning entrant in each category will receive an Australian made gardening tool (including delivery to their postal address). The overall winner across all categories will receive an additional prize of AU\$500.00 donated by the ACT Monaro Riverina Branch of the AGHS.

The judges (invited by the AGHS Photo Competition Committee) were a panel of independent experts and AGHS members with a range of expertise in photography, garden history and art.

Entries closed on 17 July 2021 and a two stage judging process was completed on 7 September 2021.

The winning entries will be announced at the Annual General Meeting of the Australian Garden History Society on Sunday 14 November 2021.

Greg Johnson, Chair AGHS Photo Competition Committee
Instagram @gardenrevue

Judging and Results

The Judges of the inaugural AGHS garden history photo competition held during 2020-2021 were:

- Dr Victoria Cooper has a 30 year practice as a photographer, artists' book maker, writer, mentor and reviewer. Cooper's creative work is located in the intersection between science and art, human and non-human. Instagram @wotwesaw.
- Lucy Culliton, one of Australia's most recognised female contemporary landscape and still-life artists. Lucy is one of those painters whose paintings relate closely to each other, as well as to her own history and way of being now¹. Instagram @lucyculliton.
- Trisha Dixon Burkitt, a writer and a photographer with a passion for landscape, literature, music, art, architecture, design and history. Her most recent book is *Spirit of the Garden*, published by the National Library of Australia in 2021. Instagram @trishadixonburkitt.
- Dr Doug Spowart has been extensively involved in creative arts for over 40 years – his practice includes photobooks, artist books, curatorships, critic, writer, judge and teacher. Instagram @woteyesaw.

Judges' comment on the Competition Entries

Viewers of the winning entries in the Garden History photography awards will be rewarded with a broad range of interesting visual interpretations of the award themes. The entrants have also written short statements to enrich or enlighten those who want to delve more deeply into the context of each photograph. All together, these images, from the formal compositions, the historical or political documentations, to the quirky and heart-warming, caught moments of contemporary life to form an entertaining visual experience. –

Victoria Cooper on behalf of the Judges.

¹ <https://www.portrait.gov.au/content/lucy-culliton>

Overall Best Entries

First – Margaret McCredie, Jindabyne, NSW – March 2021.



The lawn ranger comes to Granny's rescue!

This granny is rubbish when it comes to mowing but my grandson, Connor, is a legend!

When you live in the mountains, garden history is nothing to 'mown' about, especially with this new take on the 'Flymo'.

The challenging part of the lawn for me is the slope at one end, where mower needs to be stopped from heading downwards. I'm 82 and tough but not big and tough enough!

Maggie McCredie

Judges' Comments

*Absolutely wonderful photo – the joy and madness of it so good! Bravo!
...and also my type of lawn – bits and pieces of growth that survives without endless watering and fertilising and still scrubs up after a good occasional mowing*

*Absolutely wonderful photo – the joy and madness of it so good! Bravo!
...and also my type of lawn – bits and pieces of growth that survives without endless watering and fertilising and still scrubs up after a good occasional mowing*

Just love the animated fun in this image – brings back memories of similar lawn mow encounters.

Runner-up – Neva Kastelic, Gunghalin, ACT.



This gardener is all I aspire to be!

We are making gardening history during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020/21. As home gardeners we are turning to our patches of garden, small or large, to help make sense of the new reality of lockdown, social distancing and uncertainty. At 93, my mother maintains a productive and lovely garden as the outside world grows more worrying day by day.

Neva Kastelic

Judges' Comments

Symbolizes contemporary issues and shares an inspiring story

Happy gardener in COVID times with lovely flowers and vegetables. Says it all.

A character portrait expressing the idea that gardening keeps you vital and alive.

A great character environmental portrait! Embodies our COVID experiences and aspirations for a healthy long and fulfilling life.

Really like this image -says everything about gardening - the beauty, the joy, the productivity, the health aspect but mostly the smile on her face speaks volumes for her positive attitude to life. Bravo!

Category A – Garden or Cultural Landscape

Winner – Stuart Read, Elisabeth Bay, NSW.



Faking Nature around Lachlan Pond in Sydney's Centennial Park, early Autumn, taken using phone type: Samsung Galaxy A11

What seems, this Bidjigal Country natural garden around Lachlan Pond in Sydney's Centennial Park is to me a created, public garden that cleverly fakes it. It is entirely the creation of English engineer Frederick Augustus Franklin, aptly planted out (with paperbarks, native mat rush and other local material) by a combination of Botanic Gardens Director, Irishman Charles Moore and Overseer of the Sydney Domains, James Jones. Franklin had worked with Joseph Paxton on London's Crystal Palace. Jones had worked in Paris' formative public parks, under M. Alphand. It evokes to me this trio of gentlemen who were responsible for laying out the drives, lakes, woodland and groves and avenues of trees lining and framing this marvellous green open space. And many others. It's completely 'faked up' nature that beguiles and supports thousands and is loved by so many visitors, in return, then and now.

Stuart Read

Judges' Comments

Loved the composition of the image to appear as if found in nature ... There is a great story that refers to the Faked or reconstructed natural landscape of this view and a tribute to the vision of people that created this garden.

a beautiful image of what would seem to be a natural landscape so even more interesting to read the history of this site and the foresight of thinking individuals that need to be honoured.

Runner-up – Meg Probyn, Mittagong, NSW.



Campaign to protect an avenue of *Quercus palustris* and a row of heritage camellias. Station Street, Bowral, NSW, Winter 2020. Photograph taken using iPhone

In 2017 the AGHS Branch a campaigned to protect an avenue of *Quercus palustris* and a row of heritage camellias, which were threatened with removal due to the planned upgrade of Station Street, Bowral. The pin oaks form the entry into Bowral, and the camellias form a unique collection that represents an important part of the garden history of the Southern Highlands. The proposal was that Station Street would become a four-lane thoroughfare and clearway, through what is currently the car park at Bowral Station. The Pin oaks, planted by Bowral school children in the 1937, were at considerable risk, as were the camellias. The AGHS Branch listed Station Street Bowral as a “Landscape at Risk” on the Australian Garden History Society, and the entrance pin oak avenue (planted by school children) and heritage camellia street planting is listed as a significant cultural landscape by the National Trust. THE AGHS and Friends of Bowral campaigned very strongly to stop the debacle. The State Minister suspended the Councillors and replaced them with an excellent Administrator (Mr Viv May) who cleared out most of the Council staff and the plan was aborted in June 2021.

Meg Probyn

Judges' Comments

A documentary image with a dramatic perspective and message that suggests a tragic future for these trees – the accompanying story however provides relief in its positive outcome.

Category B – Still Life

Winner – Susan Belperio, Toorak Gardens, South Australia.

A Sequoia root lying on the still charred ground under a surviving Sequoia redwood tree. Mt Lofty, Adelaide Hills, Winter 2020, taken Using Apple iPhone 11 Pro Max.



This image of a Sequoia root lying on the still charred ground under a surviving Sequoia redwood tree, bears silent witness to the ever-present peril of fire in the scorching summer conditions of Adelaide's climate.

Historic Mt Lofty House was built in 1852 by Arthur Hardy. He planted 2 Californian giant sequoia trees. More were planted later, and still grow taller throughout the magnificent historic gardens. These trees have fire resistant bark, which is one of the reasons they can live for so long. Occasionally fire goes up the trunk of a Sequoia, burning the crown and killing the tree.

In 1983 the house and much of its garden burnt down in the Ash Wednesday bushfires, but the Sequoias survived, one had minor damage. Later the house rose like a phoenix from the ashes offering accommodation in the original rebuilt historic house and the luxury Sequoia lodges which symbolise survival.

Susan Belperio

Judges' Comments

A superb image!

A well composed still life that keeps your eye moving through the subject. The story also supported the image with interesting insights on these old trees and the contemporary issues of fire.

I like the idea that even dead wood has beauty

Runner-up Nancy Clarke – Hackett, ACT.



Cacti Rock! Karratha WA. mid-winter 2021, Photograph taken using Pixel 4A phone

My daughter in law is the specialist art teacher at Karratha Primary school. Her students have a lunch time art club. For this year's school fete, they created flowering cactus plants to sell. They collected shiny red stones from the playground, painted them green, potted them up, and topped their newly created cactus plants with glued on plastic flower. The result was a display of small synthetic cactus plants to rival the living ones sold frequently in nurseries and garden stores. They sold well on the fete's plant stall.

Nancy Clarke

Judges' Comments

Well the cactus rocks instantly made me smile. On a table with living plants for sale, there is something for everyone to take home.

A quirky image with a heart-warming story... required a second look at this image ... much to smile about here.

Category C – Gardener or Gardeners under COVID-19

Winner – Neva Kastelic – Gungahlin, ACT, Canberra.



At 93, my mother maintains a productive and lovely garden as the outside world grows more worrying day by day, winter 2021. Photograph taken using Sony.

We are making gardening history during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020/21. As home gardeners we are turning to our patches of garden, small or large, to help make sense of the new reality of lockdown, social distancing and uncertainty. At 93, my mother maintains a productive and lovely garden as the outside world grows more worrying day by day.

Neva Kastelic

Judges' Comments

Happy gardener in COVID times with lovely flowers and vegetables. Says it all.

A character portrait expressing the idea that gardening keeps you vital and alive.

A great character environmental portrait! Embodies our COVID experiences and aspirations for a healthy long and fulfilling life.

Really like this image -says everything about gardening - the beauty, the joy, the productivity, the health aspect but mostly the smile on her face speaks volumes for her positive attitude to life. Bravo!

Runner-up –Meg Probyn, Mittagong, NSW.



Clive in the Garden, winter 2020, taken using an iPhone.

The garden has never had so much attention in winter but since we couldn't travel overseas or go to AGHS meetings, we spent an inordinate amount of time in the garden. Clive renovated all the paths meticulously.

Meg Probyn

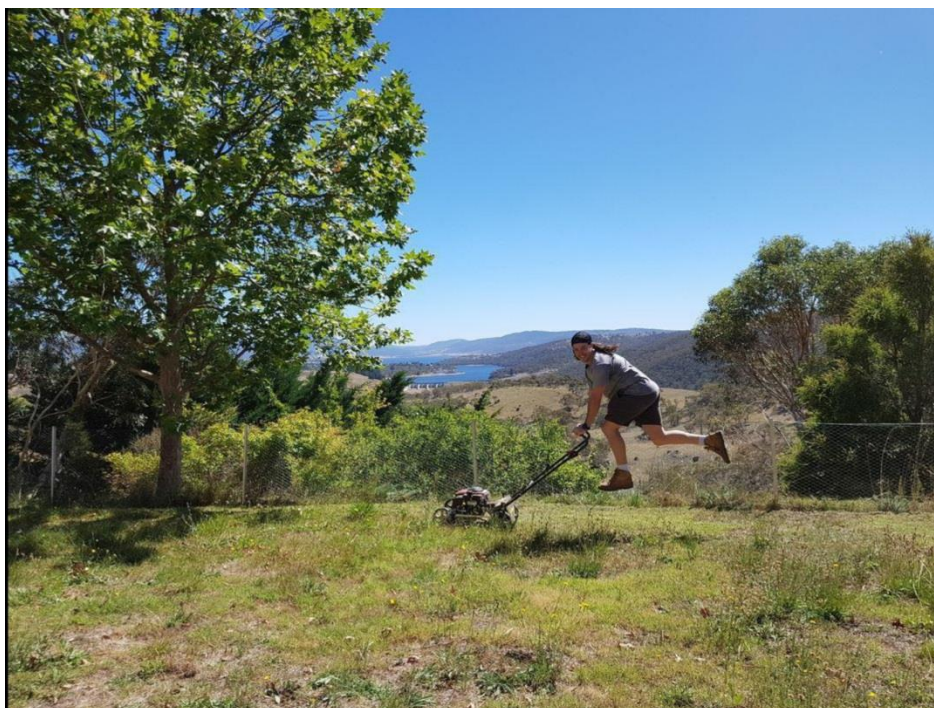
Judges' Comments

A symbolic image of a gardener on their knees working on the endless garden project

COVID gave people time to be out in their gardens, rebuilding maintaining. The best place to be.

Category D – The Lawn

Winner – Margaret McCredie, Jindabyne, NSW.



The Lawn Ranger to Granny's rescue! March 2021. Photograph taken using Samsung Galaxy 7.

This granny is rubbish when it comes to mowing but my grandson, Connor, is a legend!

When you live in the mountains, garden history is nothing to 'mown' about, especially with this new take on the 'Flymo'.

The challenging part of the lawn for me is the slope at one end, where mower needs to be stopped from heading downwards. I'm 82 and tough but not big and tough enough!

Maggie McCredie

Judges' Comments

Boy mowing and obviously enjoying the job

What a great caught moment! And the story brought chuckles and a smile.

Just love the animated fun in this image – brings back memories of similar lawn mow encounters.

*Absolutely wonderful photo – the joy and madness of it so good! Bravo!
...and also my type of lawn – bits and pieces of growth that survives without endless watering and fertilising and still scrubs up after a good occasional mowing*

Runner-up – Anna Howe, Hackett, ACT.



Lawn and grass grow side by side in the New Zealand Memorial Anzac Parade, Canberra, summer, 2021. Photograph taken using Samsung Galaxy S4.

This lawn and grass grow side by side in the New Zealand Memorial, at the start of Anzac Parade, Canberra. The contrasts between the lawn and the Poa Grass – in colour, texture, form and function – show that grass and lawn can be perfectly combined. The lawn spreads from the footpath to the bands of Poa Grass that edge paving around the kete, the basket handles that curve towards each other on either side of Anzac Parade. The lawn and grass must have been mown countless times since the Memorial was opened on the eve of Anzac Day, 2001, and the Poa Grass that can ‘turn a lawn into grass’ in a home garden has been strictly contained. The landscaping was the work of Studio Pacific Architecture, Wellington, NZ, who designed the Memorial with artist Kingsley Baird, now Professor of Fine Art, Whiti o Rehua, at Massey University, NZ.

Anna Howe

Judges' Comments

Grasses, tall grasses behind manicured lawn.

A very interesting story of the two grasses which brought meaning to the image.

The wide expanse of this image expresses the beauty of lawn, in this case blended with other plants for contrast

Category E – Garden History Imagined

Winner – Neva Kastelic, Gungahlin, ACT.



A modern Canberra take on Robert John Thornton image of tulips in published *The Temple of Flora*, A composite of photos taken in 2020, taken using Olympus camera.

In Roman mythology, Flora was the goddess of flowers and spring. Leap forward millennia to the start of the 19th century when Englishman Robert John Thornton published *The Temple of Flora*, a book containing thirty-one absolutely fabulous plates of flowers. One of the most beautiful illustrations was of tulips against a background of fields and a windmill. Now move forward again to Canberra in 2021, a 'Gardener's City' that celebrates flowers and spring through Floriade. This photo is how I imagine garden history from the perspective of my tiny garden in the suburbs. It is my interpretation of the tulips of 1798 and my homage to the line of gardeners from Flora to 2021.

Neva Kastelic

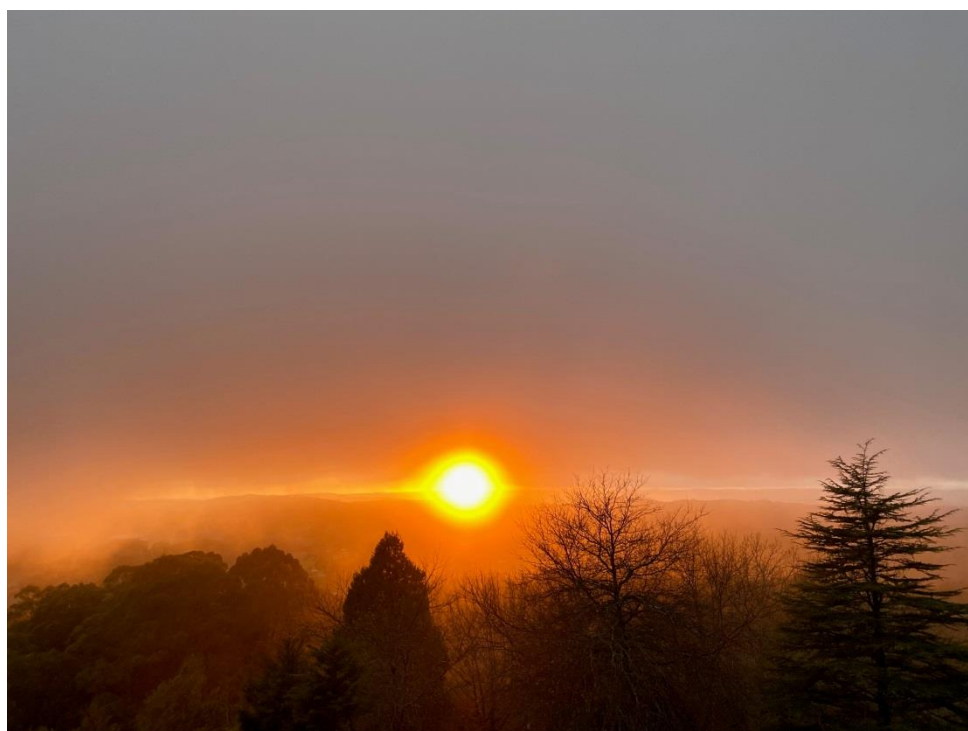
Judges' Comments

Such a startling composition and image and thought process - really amazing pic

An imaginative reinvention of an early image that connects the personal experience with the Australian and Dutch history of the tulip.

A complex concept expressed through montage and zany design.

Runner-up – Susan Belperio, Toorak Gardens, South Australia.



View from the perimeter of Mt Lofty House, overlooking the historic Mt Lofty Botanic Garden and Piccadilly Valley during a heavy mid-winter fog event, Adelaide Hills, Winter 2020, Taken Using Apple iPhone 11 Pro Max.

This is a view from the perimeter of Mt Lofty House, overlooking the historic Mt Lofty Botanic Garden and Piccadilly Valley during a heavy mid-winter fog event. Re-imagined, this misty dawn could just as easily have been smoke. In 16th February 1983 it was smoke. On that fateful day, the Ash Wednesday bushfires devastated more than half of this public garden. In South Australia, 28 lives were lost. The year 2020 was ushered in by unprecedented bushfires nationwide, and while Mt Lofty was spared at that time, other nearby areas of the Adelaide Hills were not. With a little imagination, this image could be the appearance of a hot sun rising over a pall of bushfire smoke, a terrifying thought. We can protect garden history by addressing climate change.

Susan Belperio

Judges' Comments

Sun sitting on the horizon behind exotic, healthy mature trees

A timeless reflective image of the garden.

This is a haunting image referring to a catastrophic event. Reimagines the beauty of the fog to a more unsettling past.

Superb image - timing is everything and this is perfectly captured...love the silhouettes and mist and distant hills...

Judges – by Zoom 7 September 2021

Victoria Cooper

Lucy Culliton

Trisha Dixon

Doug Spowart

Chair of the AGHS Photo Competition

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Johnson', written over a horizontal line.

Greg Johnson