

The *West Australian Gardener* magazine data base project

The *West Australian Gardener* was published by the Horticultural Council of Western Australia and launched in 1932 being the first monthly gardening magazine produced in W A. Prior to that, gardening information was through the newspapers and a regular weekly gardening column in the *Western Mail*.

Besides providing gardening advice it was also the official organ of the Horticultural Council of WA containing a directory of horticultural societies.

It took the form of a periodical, registered at the GPO for transmission by post and contained articles, many illustrated with black and white photographs, on plant culture, new varieties and gardening tips. Advertisements for local nurseries and associated horticultural and landscape services helped to offset production costs.

In the early 1990s, the national body of the Australian Garden History Society commissioned Richard Aitken to coedit *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens*, the WA branch discussed the possibility of producing a data base from the *West Australian Gardener* as a separate project for its members. As the magazine contained information appropriate to the garden history of WA through its articles and advertisements, it was deemed a worthwhile project to involve branch members.

Diana Scott, retired librarian who had formerly worked at the University of Western Australia's Mathematics and Physical Science Library oversaw the project.

The Battye Library within the State Reference Library held bound copies of the magazine which could only be accessed by request, so a research group comprising Diana, Heather Thompson and Noreen

Hocking was formed. For two and a half years they met every Wednesday morning and at various times were joined by fellow branch members, Caz Middlemis, Joan Low, Anne Willox and Sue Monger.

Each took a calendar year and following a framework suggested by Richard Aitken, summarised the key points of the articles, listing the author, title, volume number, month, year and page number.

The researchers finished at the year 1952 and the raw data sent to Richard to be digitally recorded. Unfortunately in the finished product the files were not easily retrievable and the project suspended.

Lyn Oliver, a recent committee member and retired Librarian, was able to combine all the files into a readily accessible document to retrieve the data.

There were discussions between the WA Horticultural Council and the Branch to explore the manner in which the information could be made available to the wider public.

The historical information it contains will be a valuable research tool for students and heritage professionals documenting the gardening period of the State from the nineteen thirties to the middle of the twentieth century.

The database can be easily accessed by using search terms such as author, article title, volume number, month , year and gardening categories such as herbaceous perennial with subcategories such as roses, tubers etc.

The articles are not available online so once the articles(s) required are identified, they can be accessed in two ways:


1. In person at the State Library of Western Australia, 25 Francis Street, Perth; or

2. Request the article(s) to be scanned/digitised and forwarded to you for a fee. (Each request is assessed alongside copyright regulations to make sure that fair dealing is upheld.)

<https://slwa.wa.gov.au/plan-my-visit/services/order-copy>


If searching the online LISWA catalogue use the search term 'Western Australian Horticultural Council'. Currently the journals are located on the 3rd Floor Archive Stack Call No ACC 10451A and Call No ACC 10452A.

[Catalogue: State Library of WA & WA Health Libraries Network \(slwa.wa.gov.au\)](https://slwa.wa.gov.au)



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Publish Date

Western Australian Horticultural Council records.
Western Australian Horticultural Council,
Archival | 1931-2005.
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A short history of the Western Australian Horticultural Council.
Beck, Helen Martin.
Index Entries | 2002.

The gardener's handbook : to assist exhibitors, judges of horticulture / compiled by a committee appointed by the Western Australian Horticultural Council.
Western Australian Horticultural Council.
Print Material | [1978-1991?]
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