



MEDIA RELEASE - IMMEDIATE
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Open Gardens Victoria Student Design Competition winner to create ‘living pantry’ themed MIFGS garden

Landscape designer and graduating student of the **London College of Garden Design (Melbourne)**, **Sarah McLauchlan**, is the successful recipient of the 2024 **Open Gardens Victoria Student Design Competition**. The grant provides up to \$10,000 to design and install a garden at the OGV stand at the **Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS)**, 20-24 March 2024.

“I am absolutely thrilled that my design has been selected as the winning entry. This year’s theme, *The Living Pantry*, appealed immensely. The world of edible gardens holds such a special place in my heart. In fact, I have been crafting an urban edible oasis at my own home for the past seven years,” says Sarah McLauchlan.

Open Gardens Victoria is a not-for-profit organisation that opens private gardens for the community to enjoy and actively promotes the benefits of gardens and gardening. Now in its second year, OGV’s design competition is open to Victorian-based horticultural and garden design students. It supports the development of the next generation of garden professionals, providing them with key exposure to the horticulture industry and plant lovers at MIFGS, the southern hemisphere’s largest horticulture event.

“*The Living Pantry* theme is designed to appeal to all, but especially those beginning the journey towards self-sufficiency. We were looking for entries that encouraged productive gardening and sound sustainability practices, even in small spaces,” says **Dr Karen White**, OGV’s Head of Giving.

“Sarah’s entry stood out with its strong focus on the theme. Her installation integrates clever design with attractive, compact, and efficient productive garden spaces, incorporating significant use of recycled materials and water-wise practices, as well as considering sustenance and habitat for native fauna. We can’t wait to see how the garden looks once installed!”

Called ***Nature’s Pantry***, Sarah’s winning garden design draws on a childhood spent growing up on a farm in the south-east Riverina region of NSW, surrounded by an expansive garden, a bountiful veggie patch, and a flourishing home orchard. The garden’s built elements focus on sustainability, extensively utilising reclaimed materials such as timber, plywood boards, pallets, reo mesh, and salvaged pots, all sourced in Sarah’s previous life running a commercial demolition business.

“*Nature’s Pantry* is conceived as a welcoming haven for visitors to enjoy a feast of nature’s offerings,” says Sarah. “From pollinator-friendly plants and native grasses to habitats for small creatures and birds, the space is adorned with perennial edibles, fruit trees, herbs, veggies, and bush foods. Adding to the charm, there’s a cosy tea garden, inviting visitors to pause and savour the experience of brewing amidst the flourishing abundance.”

Visit stand **B53/B54** at the **Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show**. You’ll see Sarah McLauchlan’s winning garden design, *Nature’s Pantry*, and meet our Open Gardens Victoria volunteers, who can tell you more about what is coming up for OGV this year.

‘Nature’s Pantry’ will be created on the lands of the Wurundjeri people. Open Gardens Victoria wish to acknowledge the Traditional custodians and we pay respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

For more information visit: www.opengardensvictoria.org.au

Open Gardens Victoria (OGV) is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit organisation that promotes the benefits of gardens and gardening for all Victorians. We assist garden owners to open their private gardens to the public and organise gardening and horticulturally themed events. Our activities are funded by ticket sales, and each year a portion of our surplus is applied to grants under our Giving Program for horticultural projects in the fields of education, wellness, innovation, community and sustainability.

Sarah McLauchlan is a landscape designer and recent graduate of the **London College of Garden Design (Melbourne)**, where she qualified with distinction, achieving the **2023 LCGD Melbourne Student of the Year** award. She recently established **Sarah McLauchlan Gardens**, a business devoted to creating lush and resilient gardens and captivating outdoor spaces. Rooted in the rich soil of a childhood spent on a farm, Sarah's love for plants and gardens has been a lifelong journey. Her diverse career spans physiotherapy and managing a commercial demolition company, providing experiences that enrich her perspective and contribute to a multifaceted skill set brought to her garden design. Since 2016, Sarah has refined her design skills and hands-on gardening expertise in her home garden in West Footscray, curating an edible oasis with ornamental spaces, thriving vegetable beds, fruit trees, a budding food forest, chickens and bees.

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