



The Friends of
The Australian
Arid Lands
Botanic Garden
Port Augusta Incorporated



THE AUSTRALIAN ARID LAND BOTANIC GARDEN

Port Augusta Desert Pea Festival Program

November 7th 2026

Visitor Centre Opens at 9.00am

Mayor Linley Shine Opens Festival at 09.15

Guided walks of Gardens at following times

9.30 -10.15 – Main Courtyard and Reflection Garden

11.30 -12.15 – Eremophila Garden

13.30 -14.15 – Rare Plants and Bush Foods

Walks are \$10pp regardless of how many you do, bookings made at Guides Table in Marquee - bring hats, water and sunscreen

10.30 -11.15 – Guest speaker Sophie Thomson – pre book

Topic – *Cooler, Greener More Liveable Backyards*

12.30 – 13.15 – Guest Speaker Dr Greg Kirby

Topic – *Natural Distribution of Desert Pea, soil requirements, brief history of cultivation from Germany in 1800's to Australia in 1900's, suggestions for cultivation in gardens and pots*

14.30 – 15.30 – Guest Speaker Sophie Thomson – pre book

Topic – *Rewilding a Challenging Landscape, the development of the garden at Sophies Patch*

(Guest speakers presenting in Meeting Room along from gift shop – limited seating)

Food and drinks can be purchased from the Blue Bush Café – 9am-5pm

Lions BBQ trailer out near Eremophila Garden doing a sausage/steak sandwiches, selling cold drinks

Stall holders set up in large marquee near rear entrance to visitor centre

Musical Entertainment – in outside dining area - Desert Voices & PA Music Club

Fun Facts Sturt Desert Pea

- Specimens of Sturt's desert pea were first collected by William Dampier who recorded his first sighting on 22 August 1699 on Rosemary Island. These specimens are today in the Fielding-Druce Herbarium at the University of Oxford in England.
- First Australian plant described by an English botanist.
- Sturt's Desert Pea was first adopted as the floral emblem of South Australia in 1961. The plant is protected in South Australia, and picking the pea is illegal without a permit.
- The flower has long been a part of Aboriginal culture, with many local names and myths attributed to it. The Adnyamathanha word for the species, ngarapanha, can be translated as 'little liar', as it was thought to deceive locals into thinking there was water nearby.
- Scientific name is *Swainsona formosa* - Issac Swainson an English Botanist – Formosa means beautiful (previously known as *Clianthus formosa*).
- One of the Sturt's Desert Pea structural adaptations is their long tap root. These allow the plant to access water deep in the soil. This is because the plant is most commonly found in desert or dry areas with little water. The seeds can survive for a long period of time, being able to grow after several years. It is a hard covering which protects it from the outside dry environment until the following rainfall. When they do bloom, the seeds that are produced are carried about by the wind, spreading them apart. This helps continue to grow and survive.



The Friends of the AALBG acknowledge the following for the assistance given in enabling this Festival to take place

