

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Place
Entry ID: AWE0254

Olive Pink Botanic Garden

(1956 -)

Born 1 January, 1956, Alice Springs Northern Territory Australia

Occupation Public Gardens

Summary

The Olive Pink Botanic Gardens, located in Alice Springs in the Northern Territory were established in 1956 by their founder, anthropologist Olive Pink. Originally named the Australian Arid Regions Native Flora Reserve, and then the Olive Pink Flora Reserve, Miss Pink and her Warlpiri assistant gardeners worked for nearly two years to establish a public area for the appreciation of central desert native fauna.

Olive Pink lived in the Tanami desert in Central Australia with Aboriginal people for 36 years before starting work on a Floral Reserve at Alice Springs in 1956. Miss Pink worked on the development of the sixteen-hectare reserve with the assistance of Aboriginal gardeners until her death in 1975. The Olive Pink Botanic Garden opened to the public in 1985.

Details

The following is a summary of an article by Stuart Traynor, Trustee of the Olive Pink Flora Reserve, appearing in *The Australian Garden Journal*:

“The Olive Pink Flora Reserve...is situated on the east bank of Alice Springs’ dry Todd River. The 16ha reserve was gazetted in 1956. Olive pink was granted an occupational lease on part of the reserve on condition that she act as honorary curator. She lived there in a galvanised iron shed until she died in 1975 at the age of 91.

“It was Miss Pink’s intention that the reserve contain representative specimens of the desert flora of Central Australia. It was to this end that she and her Aboriginal gardener Jonny Jambijimba Yannarilyi worked. Following her death the reserve was renamed Olive Pink Flora Reserve and is managed today as a tribute to her vision and tenacity. It is currently Australia’s only established arid zone botanic garden despite the fact that nearly three quarters of the continent is arid land.

“The reserve has over 300 of the Centre’s 800 plant species on display. Sections of the reserve are being developed to represent distinct habits within Central Australia. These include a sand dune system, mulga woodland, a rocky waterhole and, below it, a creek flood out area. These areas are enhanced by the original vegetation of the rocky hills which surround much of the reserve.

“The reserve aims to increase appreciation of Australia’s arid zone flora and encourage the use of indigenous native vegetation in Central Australian gardens and landscape design.”

Published resources

Journal Article

Miss Pink's Garden: The Creation of an Arid Zone Botanic Garden, Marcus, Julie, 1998

The Olive Pink Flora Reserve, Traynor, Stuart

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