

## MEDIA RELEASE

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Attention: News Editor

### Festival blooms

A new tourist drawcard is blooming across the Great Southern this spring.

More than 30 events and activities are on the program of the inaugural Hidden Treasures Great Southern Bloom Festival, a celebration of the region's 1800-plus wildflower species.

The Great Southern Bloom Festival blossomed at Ongerup's Yongergnow Malleefowl Centre on Friday 16 September with an official opening that included a Pottiest Personality competition, bush tucker tastings and the announcement of the winners of the Capture Your Hidden Treasures photo competition.

The festival is an initiative of the Hidden Treasures of the Great Southern, supported by \$80,000 of Tourism WA funding secured through the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC).

Eight shires in the Great Southern make up the Hidden Treasures group: Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup, Katanning, Kent, Kojonup and Woodanilling.

Hidden Treasures chair Di Holly said the festival embraced several existing spring wildflower shows and added a range of new events.

"Bloom Festival offers wildflower walks, open garden displays, two long table lunches and even an 'extreme flower arranging' competition at Woodanilling," Mrs Holly said.

"There is a competition for an afternoon out with Farmer Shaun, from Farmer Wants A Wife, and there will be a bush poets' performance at the Pingrup grain silos."



**Contestants Zahra Shirazee (left), Farmer Shaun and Aaron Cook battle it out for the Pottiest Personality title at Ongerup's Yongergnow Malleefowl Centre.**

Farmer Shaun (Nyabing local Shaun Fewson) was a competitor in Ongerup's Pottiest Personality competition, along with departing Gnowangerup Chief Executive Officer Aaron Cook and Australia's South West marketing coordinator Zahra Shirazee.

Mr Cook won the frenzied three-minute game that involved potting as many plants as possible while warding off the mischief of his fellow contestants.

Bremer Bay will open its new drive trail on Friday 7 October as part of the Bloom Festival, and garden enthusiasts can learn more about sustainability at presentations in Kojonup and Gnowangerup, and about using plants for fire protection at a session in Kojonup.

Ongerup is presenting its annual three-week wildflower display at the Ongerup-Needilup Museum, as well as a bush food lunch at the Yongergnow Malleefowl Centre on 16 October.

Farmer Shaun is joined on the program's celebrity list by My Kitchen Rules personalities Daniela and Stephania, Greenfingers presenter Sue McDougall and renowned botanical artist Katrina Syme.

GSDC Chief Executive Officer Bruce Manning said the initiative promised to expand opportunities for regional enterprises serving the tourism market.

"Since its Perth launch in August, the Great Southern Bloom Festival has gained good exposure in Perth media, which augurs well for tourism numbers during the wildflower season," Mr Manning said.

Great Southern Bloom Festival is also supported by Keep Australia Beautiful WA, which is providing free Outback Clean-up packs through visitor centres and Community Resource Centres in the Hidden Treasures shires.

More information about the festival is available at [www.hiddentreasures.com.au](http://www.hiddentreasures.com.au).

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