

Kathleen

21 Downey Street, Karabah NSW

16 – 17 April 2016



Kathleen was Trevor's grandmother. His early memory of her is playing in the winding path through her garden, taking care to not be hit by weeds flying over her shoulder as she potted in the beds.

Why do we garden? This is our place to de-stress and relax at the end of a hard day and a busy week. A place where we experiment and play with landscape ideas and tend to our favourite plants. Or sometimes just sit and look. Our garden is designed to provide interesting colour and foliage and views that change through the seasons.

We have used Japanese gardening principles to guide our work including:

- separating the deciduous canopy from the evergreen understory
- using rocks and pruning to create the effect of miniature landscapes
- contrasting very formal shapes with more natural features

We were attracted to the romance of Japanese garden tradition and have experimented with ways to bring this about in an Australian environment. We love how Australian plants can fit with these themes and work together or in contrast with exotic plants. Travelling to Japan to visit several gardens in Autumn changed our outlook on what garden design could achieve.

Our garden is a place for experimenting with new and unusual plants, optimistically rescuing abandoned or neglected plants, and affectionately caring for our favourite specimens.

In February a hail storm stripped the canopy of many of the trees in the main garden. You can see the empty branches overhead. We removed a trailer full of green waste the next day. So it goes.

A Walking Guide

A. From the driveway on Downey Street, on the left hand side under the huge Eucalypt is a dry garden of dwarf Oleander and varieties

of *Dietes*. Heading south along the gravel path is a Japanese spring blossom garden. This area features deciduous *Magnolia soulangeana* and *M. stellata*, flowering *Prunus* and *Pyrus* underplanted with *Kalmia latifolia*, varieties of *Viburnum* and *Aquilegia*. In summer *Escallonia* 'Iveyi' and *E. rubra*, *Osmanthus*, *Eremophila* and windflowers maintain the colour along with the roses on the fence. Winter features a Hebe border with *Garrya elliptica* (currently struggling against fungal infection). The border opposite is dwarf *Pomegranate*.

B. The West Gate was our first major project together. Over the Gate is "Wedding Day" rose and many of the garden views were set out from here. On the right is the bridge across a dry river bed with *Acer* 'Ukigumo' (or "Floating Cloud") and *Corylus avellana* 'Contorta'. Here you can see our Japanese Maple collection. We have collected about 12 *Acer dissectum*, either rescued from gardens or selected from specialist growers, as well as the two oldest maples overhead and 10 other maples throughout the garden. Most of the maples will usually be turning for Autumn within the next two weeks, each one a different colour. The white sandstone straight ahead is our pride and joy. On both sides of the white paved path is our "Moss Garden" with creeping *Thymus* and stones.

C. Ahead to the Pond with its island lantern, waterlilies and Japanese iris. The pond is home to a 20 year old goldfish and many youngsters. On the house are trellises with several varieties of *Clematis*. The *Cupressus sempervirens* 'Swane's Gold' is an original feature of the garden, and now centre piece of the Sacred Garden. We have sculpted *Michelia yunnanensis*, *Daphne* 'Eternal Fragrance', *Pittosporum* 'Miss Muffett' and *Prostanthera ovalifolia* 'Variegata' over white pebbles with the Buddha to welcome as you cross the bridge to the entry deck.

D. At the Entry Deck is our biggest experiment – the Green Wall. We have tried

out many plants here and the most successful so far have been *Hardenbergia*, *Jasmine* 'Tricolor', *Bergenia*, *Geranium* and *Dianthus*. In the silver pot opposite is our prized *Euonymus alatus*, and beyond that a potted *Fraxinus excelsior* 'Aurea'.

E. Along the stepper path to toward the streetfront we have combined Australian natives to provide the evergreen framework and privacy, including various *Correas*, *Banksias*, *Grevilleas*, *Philotheca* and dwarf Eucalyptus trees. Into this we have mixed *Raphiolepis indica*, *Pieris japonica variegatum* and varieties of Pine and Yew to create the formal Japanese feel we wanted. Overhead are *Parrotia persica*, *Ginkgo biloba* and one of our favourite trees, the red trunk *Arbutus canariensis*. On the fence are uncommon flowering vines including Chilean Jasmine (*Mandevilla laxa*) and variegated climbing hydrangea (*Hydrangea anomala petiolaris* 'Miranda').

F. The Stone Seat near the West gate is our favourite place to sit at the end of a day in the garden. The Moss Garden was designed to be viewed when you sit down. On the right is a tiny *Acer* 'Suminagashi', which we almost lost to our terrible puppy. This is a seedling from a single tree sent by the Japanese Emperor from his own garden to celebrate the new Australian Parliament House, given to us by a maple enthusiast who regularly harvests seeds from our trees.

G. Down to the red brick circle at the South Gate on Anne Street, this is our most recent project. After we returned from Japan we started "making space" in the garden to give each plant some room to have its own

character. We removed an old arbour and several large shrubs. Keeping just one *Wisteria* we built a larger arbour and opened up the space to feature the *Banksia integrifolia* which had already been bonsaied due to lack of space. We experimented with dramatically pruning the *Banksia*, the *Feijoa* and the *Bay tree* and hauled in some more rocks to form our new Zen Garden. Opposite, at the window is a rare *Stachyurus praecox* which is now forming beautiful pendulous winter flowers. In front of it is a Japanese gem *Enkianthus* (still not cold enough for autumn colour yet) underplanted with *Hellebores*, *Hydrangea* and *Peony*. Overhead the *Gleditsia rubra* has lost most of its foliage to the hail storm.

H. Around the back of the house is a shaded garden with acidic soil. We are rescuing this area from the dog so it's still struggling. It includes *Camellia*, *Rhododendron*, *Azalea* and *Pieris japonica*. Overhead is a flowering *Ash* and on the fence is *Clematis armandii*. Toward the garage is our productive garden with a few *Ballerina* apples, apricot, lemon, lime, cumquat, finger lime and an espaliered olive.

I. The BBQ and Deck area are our "Dog Proof Garden". The fences we hope will be temporary but the cactus have been an inspiration. We lost several plants here to our puppy including a whole season crop of veggies and herbs in the raised bed. The stained glass is salvaged from a wrecker in Sydney. This area multi tasks as the work yard for our landscape business and our entertaining area.



Visit other gardens opening in Queanbeyan this weekend:

	Entry fee	Hours of opening
Art Studio Garden: 48 Brereton Street	\$8 adult	10am – 4pm
Railway Park Community Garden: cnr Henderson Road and Crest Road	Free	10am – 1pm
Queanbeyan Sensory Garden: in Ray Morton Park, off Waniassa Street or Trinculo Place	Free	1 – 4pm
And our last garden for the 2015 – 16 season: Open 30 April – 1 May		
Carol's Hillside Oasis: 109 O'Connor Circuit, Calwell	\$8 adult	10am – 4pm