18 Dutton Street Dickson garden

The garden was re-established from 2001 onwards, following the replacement of the original house. The new house is a very simple passive solar house, with the long axis east–west, perfectly perpendicular to the sun at the mid point of the day in winter, and front of the house facing north. The house had been placed as far forward on the block, to maximise the size of the back garden. Because of these two factors, there was a particularly urgent need for a fast growing mass of shrubs to give some privacy from the street, but not to take sun in the winter.

So the front yard consists of the sole survivor of the original 1950s garden, a Feijoa *Acca sellowiana*, plus a mix of fast-growing West Wyalong Wattle *Acacia cardiophylla*, Fringed Wattle *A. fimbriata*, Slender Teatree *Leptospermum brevipes*, Creek Teatree *L. obovatum* and not as fast growing Tumut Grevillea *Grevillea wilkinsonii*, all of which are readily pruned to facilitate winter sun access to the northern windows of the house.

The driveway is planted with a mix of Cut-leaved Burr Daisy *Calotis anthemoides* and Slender Mint *Mentha diemenica*, both of which have survived the Dickson Experiment Station of CSIRO, which predated the houses here.

Along the front wall of the house there is a c. 1 m wide bed for tall vegetables in summer (beans, tomatoes ...) to reduce reflected light/heat from the north, and for less tall species in winter (lettuces, Brassicaceous greens).

I have deliberately not grown many nectar producing species, being keen to encourage the resident Brown Thornbills, White-browed Scrubwrens and Superb Fairy Wrens, which are chased mercilessly by the larger honeyeaters, such as Red Wattlebirds.

The back yard has been divided by concrete paths into manageable sections. The large, central portion devoted to vegetables is flanked by one path to the compost bin and chookyard next door, and another to the shedio (posh shed that wants to be a studio when it grows up). There are Australian plants on the outer sides and along part of the back fence: another Slender Teatree, Silver-leaved Mountain Gum *Eucalyptus pulverulenta* (grown from seed collected from the northern-most population near Bathurst) and some recently planted wattles along the western end of the back fence: Bent-leaf Wattle *Acacia flexifolia,* Gold*-*dust Wattle *A. acinacea,* Bower Wattle *A. cognata* and Varnish Wattle *A. verniciflua*. I encourage the growing of mallee eucalypt species, as they are relatively easily pruned to ground level whenever they become too large, and can then very quickly produce new stems.

There is a 24000 l water tank at the end of the driveway, plus a smaller 6­7000 l one in south­eastern corner This provides some very useful thermal mass to support a Washington Navel Orange most successfully, as well as being well positioned to facilitate watering. Thermal mass is just as valuable in a garden as it is inside a building, serving to diminish temperature variation. Most of Dickson was originally grassland, as it was too cold to support eucalypts.