



The Oaks Estate Garden

35 William St, Oaks Estate. 2620

For thirty years we had a beautiful garden in inner south Griffith that was in the Australian Open Gardens in 2006. In 2007 an opportunity presented to purchase a house in William St, Oaks Estate directly behind our eldest daughters house in George St. The development of the George St garden had been started in 2003 and our daughter Jessica who is also a keen gardener has planted a mainly native garden on the site. We moved in in December 2007 and the following year began the design and planting of the garden.

One of the first jobs was to remove the fence between the two properties and build the chicken house and expand the vegetable garden. The soil in both gardens is very sandy so we need to add a lot of manure and lucerne. The front garden was completed by February 2008 and planted with a range of frost hardy native plants. There was very little in the back garden except a white banksia rose on a broken trellis, a straggly Indian Bean Tree (*Catalpa Bignoniodes*) and an assortment of old sheds and acres of couch grass and rubbish.

The first task was to lay out the areas for garden beds and other plantings and to excavate to establish the large frog pond. A semi mature Japanese Elm (*Zelkova Serrata*) was planted to shade the western wall of the house and a support structure was built using the old iron lacework from the front fence to support the Banksia Rose. The Kurrajongs were also planted as were the native shrubs including those around the frog pond. The old garage (previously the original house) was converted to a self-contained flat in 2010.

The back garden is planted mainly with cold climate perennials many of them brought from the old Griffith garden but with many other plants sourced through online nurseries in Tasmania and Victoria. The flower garden is spectacular in the spring with aquilegias, fox gloves, poppies, lavender and bulbs all growing wild. By mid-summer it is more subdued but by late summer

all the salvias are in full bloom along with a range of annuals, oak leaf hydrangeas and summer flowering perennials.

The garden is planted to attract both bees and birds. There is a wide range of parrots, wrens and finches that visit the garden but also tawny frog mouth owls, satin bower birds and even kookaburra's and once a cormorant looking for fish in the frog pond. Being close to the river we also have snakes that visit the garden for frogs, but mainly in the early summer.

Winters are very cold in Oaks Estate and some of the original planting have not survived so areas of the garden have been redesigned to better suit the climate.

Gardeners Peter O'Dea, Fiona MacGregor and Jessica O'Dea