

Woodburn Garden

20 Mulga Street, O'Connor

Open 21 - 22 November 2015



A grassland on our small nature strip introduces our mostly native garden. Australian grasses (*Themeda*, *Austrodanthonia*, *Austrostipa* and *Poa*) combine with bluebells (*Wahlenbergia*), daisies (*Brachyscome*, *Calotis*, *Chrysocephalum*) and more.

In front of the house we have planted a mixture of Australian and exotic plants. A developing hedge of camellias to the west is dominated by a *Banksia integrifolia* with *Billardiera cymosa* (in flower) climbing through it. Tree ferns close to the house add a different colour and texture with their arching fronds and they soften the building, as will the rapidly growing leatherwood (*Eucryphia moorei*). Correas add a touch of colour in winter/spring. The Eastern boundary has been planted with three Eucalypts (*E. leucoxylon rosea*, and *E. mannifera*), two *Eremophila* species, some Grevilleas and *Leptospermum* Copper Glow, which screens the path that runs down the eastern side of the house. This area has been heavily planted with a mixture of wattles, correas, bottlebrushes and provides a wall of greenery. The corresponding plantings on the west side of the house are now beginning to grow vigorously, following recent removal of the neighbour's woody weeds!

The design of our solar passive house has strongly influenced the plantings in the back garden; we cannot have anything larger than a small shrub near the extensive north facing windows. Hence we have planted native grasses, daisies, grevilleas, bluebells and other low plants that provide an interesting mix of textures and colours throughout the year. The 'deciduous' eaves have ornamental grapevines growing on them, to prevent summer sun from entering the house. The paved outdoor living area has been deliberately set at a distance from the house so that radiant heat isn't transmitted inside. We have planted Chinese gooseberries that increasingly provide dense summer shade to this area. The immediate plants in this area are chosen to form a shady 'cave' of vegetation.

A small stream and pond create a focal point in front of the paved area. The stream is edged with plants with strap-like leaves (*Dianella*, *Orthrosanthos*, *Thelionema*, *Ficinia*, *Lomandra*). The middle area to the west of the stream is planted with taller growing shrubs (*Eremophila racemosa*, *Acacia adunca*) that provide a contrast to the smaller plants in front and behind. A strategically placed garden bench allows for an interesting view! We have a thriving colony of naturalised *Pterostylis curta* beneath and beside the bench, which have now entered their dormant phase.

The northern fence-line has been planted with a mixture of mallee Eucalypts (*E. platypus*, *E. mooreii* var *latiuscula*, *E. aenea*, *E. diversifolia*), bottlebrushes, wattles etc. Unfortunately the deep red clay soils provide plenty of nutrients and the eucalypts are growing much taller than we wanted, and hence have to be lopped every second year.

Some WA plants are being grown in raised beds on either side of the main path. The original soil was lightened with 50% river sand and plant growth here has been phenomenal! There are three species of *Xanthorrhoea* (*latifolia*, *minor* and *pressiana*).

The garden bed that faces NW is about to be redone. At present it is mostly creeping boobialla - originally one plant! I will dig in a lot of river sand and build a low rockery in which small growing species will be planted. A garden is never finished!

We have aimed to have some colour at all times of the year. In winter the correas are superb, as are some species of *Eremophila*, then come the early wattles, followed by the spring flush. In summer the everlasting daisies are a bright spot, as are the *Brachyscomes* and *Isotomas*. There are always flowers on *Grevillea rhyolitica* and *G. Lady O*.

The majority of plants were bought as tube stock. Buying small has several advantages, in addition to cost! The most important one is that any roots that may be coiled can be straightened out at planting. I have had too many plants bought in larger pots that die after a couple of years due to root constriction. When pulled out the problem can be seen where large roots are still in the shape of the original tube that the plant was first grown in. The plant has choked itself!

I prune most plants heavily after flowering to stop them from becoming 'leggy', and to promote vigorous growth. All prunings are mulched and returned to cut down water loss and weed growth. I always fertilise, usually twice yearly, with a low phosphorous general purpose granulated fertiliser. Selected plants are given a weekly weakly dose of soluble fertiliser. Most plants respond to this, but one must NEVER give it to plants in the *Proteaceae* family.

Another garden open this weekend:

Tom's Sustainable Garden, 22 Irene Street,
Queanbeyan

Other gardens opening soon:

Peter & Lyn's Garden, 1048 Old Cooma Rd,
Googong NSW



Open 21 – 22 November 2015

Open 28 – 29 November 2015

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