



MAYFIELD

Hello and welcome to our garden. We purchased No 26 Gratwick Street in January 2003 just after the terrible Canberra bush fires. The bigger house and larger block attracted us here but it was hard leaving behind a pretty garden in Curtin. However, an extra bonus was a big empty back yard just perfect for a lovely new garden.

Our new front garden had basic landscaping with lush lawn, but far too many trees and little else of interest. By Easter 2003, stage three water restrictions were in place and we could no longer use the automated sprinkler system in the front areas and the lawn quickly died.

Gardening is my passion (my husband loves admiring only) and I brought loads of cuttings and seedlings from my former garden. Family, friends and neighbours have also been a great source of plants, cuttings and seedlings for our garden and I nursed these through quite a harsh winter while we cleared dead shrubbery and also built a composting and utility area. I begged a trailer load of leaves from our back neighbour and our composting was away! The quiet winter months were also spent designing the back garden. Our block sits on a gentle slope so terracing seemed a good idea, with soft paths of gravel so that every precious drop of rainfall would stay in our garden.

Our new front garden needed a complete face-lift as we found many problems apart from the dying lawn. Of the seven trees we had in a smallish area we decided to cull three. All dead grass was removed, new garden beds added, others enlarged and paths were widened. We decided to use very light coloured gravel for the paths and the extra parking by the kerb.

Because our two brittle gums (*Manifera*) rather dominated the front garden, a mix of natives and exotics was planted. The round central bed became a rockery, thanks to several neighbours who donated their unwanted rocks. Soils were improved with compost and a pelleted fertilizer. We mulch well with organic mulches to keep moisture in and weeds out.

The narrow garden bed on the left of our driveway was planted out with *Thuja Occidentalis* 'Smaragd' which now makes a lovely living fence and backdrop to the lavenders and ground covers in front of them. To welcome visitors to the front door we chose a weeping cherry, encircled by clipped box hedging and mounds of *diosma* in the middle.

Building the back garden was the most fun. We wanted a colourful garden with lots of roses under planted with cottage plants. Ugly fences needed to be hidden so many flowering shrubs and sasanqua camellias were planted along fence lines. We had kept several tree sized shrubs, a melaleuca, a photinia and a hakea so the resulting shady areas were filled with camellia Japonicas, hydrangeas, cold hardy ferns, acanthus, hellebores, and a variety of variegated plants like *Brunnera*. A mountain laurel (*Kalmia Latifolia*) was planted in dappled shade and rewards us every spring with exquisite crinoline shaped flowers.

Climbing roses were used to shelter the Barbecue area and smaller patio from the hot westerly sun, and many other climbing plants clamber up the trellis in the side garden. These include star jasmine, clematis and gelsemium Sempervirens (Carolina Jasmine). Some new areas have been added since our last open garden in 2011. The small area between the sheds has been planted with a crabapple, roses, dwarf weigela, viburnum and hebe, crepe myrtle and lemon scented conifer in pots. Some pretty ground covers flourish in the front.

A new side fence was installed on the higher side and this area was replanted with camellias and ground covers. Sadly we lost one of our eucalypts to a lightning strike in January 2016, but on the up-side the plants nearby are flourishing due to extra light.

Birds love our garden and we get many different birds visiting. You may be wondering why we named our garden 'Mayfield'? Husband John is a Kiwi and spent many happy holidays in his youth on Mayfield farm near Piriaka where his Mum grew up. She was delighted that we had named our garden after the family farm.

Some of the products we use to keep the garden thriving are; Organic Plus (pelleted) Power feed, Seasol, and Go Go Juice. If I can get hold of some worm liquid I use that too, the plants love it! Maybe a worm farm will be the next project?

We hope you have enjoyed visiting our garden and thank you for coming.

Jo and John Gross

2018