



The Relaxed Garden 17 Gilmore Crescent, Garran
October 20-21 2018

Our 24 year old garden is on an 800-odd square metre block with numerous trees and shrubs, a good proportion of which are fruiting (apricot, fig, plum, white cherry, crab apple, thornless raspberry and blackberry, and feijoa). It also has two frog ponds (i.e., no fish) connected by a “stream”, no lawn, and meandering brick paths. In the early days we did an evening garden-design course, which helped a lot. We were encouraged to open the garden, by gardening friends who said it has some interesting design ideas.

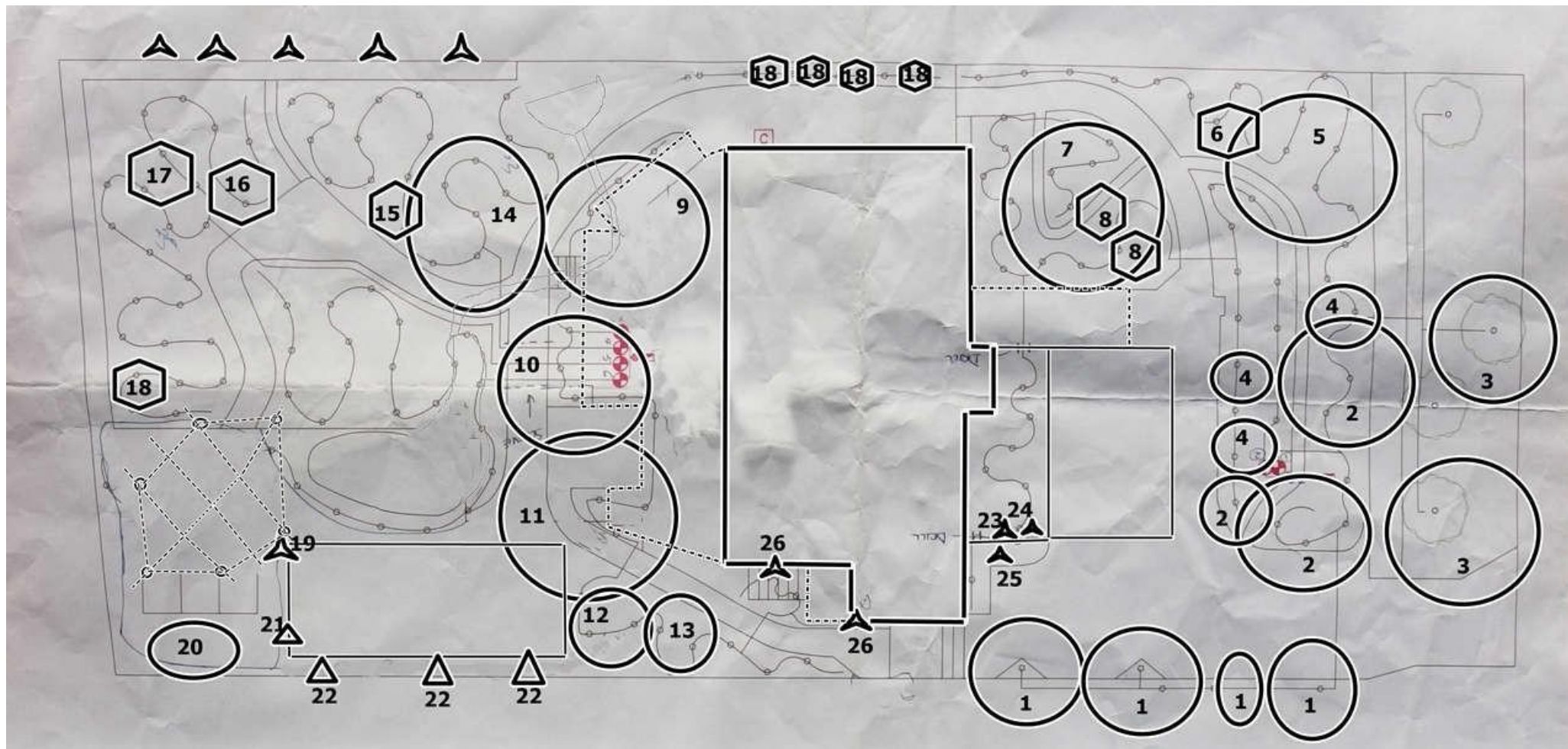
When we bought the house a horticulturalist told us that the back garden, which faces north, had very good soil, was relatively wind-sheltered and was laid out in a traditional eastern European style of fruit trees near the house and vegetable plots beyond. However, apart from the ageing fruit trees, weeds were the only plants. Initially, we tried growing Australian natives down the back for screening, but they didn't like the soil. It's now an informal English cottage garden and we use this informality as an excuse for less intensive maintenance. Initially there was lots of concrete in straight lines, much of it raised or broken by tree roots. We have replaced it with curved paths of ungrouted bricks, which are easy to lift and replace after chopping out disrupting roots.

In addition to enjoying the sound of water, Common Eastern Froglets and the Spotted Marsh Frogs, we can choose, depending on the weather, one of three different places where we can sit and have friends for a cuppa or meal. In summer it's about 4 degrees cooler under the wisteria arbour. If we've pruned it correctly last autumn (i.e., not too severely) its metre-long flower racemes will be like chandeliers from underneath. We also enjoy having a garden view from, and light into, our living room from both the front and back gardens. Another delight for us is the courtyard garden, with its lemonade tree, onto which the bathroom's floor to ceiling windows look.

Grey water from our bathroom, and the rinse cycle of our washing machine, provides a fair proportion of the water, which passes through sedges and reeds in the lower part of the stream. The most important issue with any water feature is to build it with the best materials you can afford to the best standard you can, so as to minimise the likelihood of leaks. Firestone's 1mm EPDM or Du Pont's 0.85mm Xavan (depending on pond shape) are good. If you're including a pump look for high efficiency and reliability. Our 4k lph pump is rated at 100 watts.

We built our rear deck out to the original fruit trees, but over time have replaced the plum and pear with maples, because cockatoos eating the pears over the deck made a horrible mess and while we accepted the possums eating the plums, when they also started eating the leaves it deprived us of the main advantage of the trees – namely their shade in summer. Unfortunately the white cherry tree is nearing the end of its life.

In the front garden, we replaced 1960s oleanders, a cabbage tree, a loquat and an enormous cypress with, among other trees and shrubs, silver and canoe (paper) birches, with bulbs planted underneath. But over time the birches are succumbing to beetles during our dry summers and we're replacing them with crepe myrtles.



1	Canoe (Paper) Birch,	8	Viburnum Tomentosum & Plicatum Lanarth	15	Mock Orange	22	Bottle Brush (Lemon & Red)
2	Silver Birch	9	Canadian Maple "Autumn Blaze"	16	Unknown: Deep-red in Autumn	23	Clematis Spooneri
3	Chinese Pistachio	10	Silver Maple (Acer Saccharinum)	17	Feijoa "Mammoth"	24	Clematis arandii
4	Crepe Myrtle "Indian Summer"	11	White cherry	18	Camellia EG Waterhouse	25	Red climbing Rose "Amadeus"
5	Bechtel Crab Apple (Ioensis Plena)	12	D'Agen Prune	19	Wisteria floribunda (Longissima)	26	Virginia Creeper
6	Feijoa Sellowiana	13	Damson plum	20	Fig (Black Genoa)		
7	Plum (Prunus Nigra)	14	Apricot (Moorpark)	21	Ornamental grape		