

# GARDEN NOTES

## THE WOODLAND WALK

12 LAVER PLACE, MELBA



19-20 OCTOBER 2019

### HISTORY

We undertook a major landscaping project in late 2013, creating a new garden on our 1100 m<sup>2</sup> block in Melba. The block's main strengths were a north-facing backyard (with maximum sun in winter) and its situation next to a small reserve, allowing a sense of space and the use of a 'borrowed landscape' of established eucalypt trees next door.

The aims were to maximise our enjoyment of the garden, to minimise the ongoing work and to make best use of the potential of the site. This involved removing all grass (no mowing!), reducing the gradient of the slope, minimising the use of steps, installing automatic drip irrigation to all major plants and birdbaths, and planting trees and shrubs suitable for the Canberra climate and conditions.

We have called our young garden the 'Woodland Walk' because the most exciting part of our project was the creation of a garden area adjoining the reserve with the long-term aim of it being a shaded walk with woodland plants.

Some of the things we love about this garden are: watching the fascinating colours and form of the plants through the seasons, using it as a setting for interesting sculptures and ornaments, and sharing it with the many birds that abound in the locality. Donna also has an interest in propagating new plants, many of which have been used to fill out the garden.

### FEATURES

One of the main features of our garden is the extensive use of sandstone retaining walls, bringing softness and colour. We have also used lots of deciduous trees and shrubs with lovely colour, flowers and foliage. The garden also features some interesting birdbaths to keep our feathered friends happy, and some beautiful sculptures and ornaments.

### MAP

You can tour the garden in a counter-clockwise direction, starting from the front garden.

The **front garden** is east-facing and on a gentle slope, divided into two by the driveway. The five medium-sized trees - one Gleditsia and four Forest Pansies - provide shelter for weeping

maples, rhododendrons, azaleas, pieris, gardenias, hellebores and spring-flowering bulbs. The low borders are Nandina moonbay.

Through the brown gate, you enter the **back garden** (our 'shades of green' garden). It is north-facing on two levels divided by long, curving sandstone retaining walls. Wide steps lead from the paved area to a gravel path and garden beds. The three crabapple trees blend with native shrubs - a mix of grevillea, callistemon, westringea and correa. Moving to the more sheltered area of the garden, there are two Japanese maples with daphne odora, daphne genkwa and fuschias below, and a backdrop of burgundy cordyline.

Keep walking along the paved area, and the back garden links to the 'Woodland Walk' via a work area with a potting bench, small greenhouses, plant trolleys and a garden shed.

The '**Woodland Walk**' is south- and west-facing but luckily protected by our neighbours' large shade trees and our 30-metre long and now 1.8 metre high pittosporum hedge. A gravel path divides two long garden beds.

On the side nearest the house, there are deciduous magnolias and coral bark maples, with a camellia hedge ('Jennifer Susan' - sasanqua), azaleas, oak-leaf hydrangeas, hellebores, heuchera, aquilegia and pieris. Now that our young trees are establishing, we can focus on low-growing perennials and ground covers.

On the side nearest the hedge, there are evergreen magnolias ('Little Gem'), oak-leaf hydrangeas, daphne odora, azaleas and camellias ('Volunteer' - sasanqua). The low border is Nandina dwarf nana.

Between the driveway and the reserve, we have created a **dry creek bed area**. Its purpose is to provide a soft border to blend the garden into the next-door reserve. It's a low-maintenance area with low-growing green strappy-leaf plants, predominantly Lomandra (katrinus and tanika) but also dietes and blue fescue grass. It's bordered by crepe myrtles and an elm tree to help define the area.

#### REFRESHMENTS, PLANTS AND GARDEN ORNAMENTS

Melba Tennis Club volunteers will provide morning/afternoon tea. There will also be a plant stall and a display/sale of hand-made garden ornaments.

#### GARDEN OWNERS

Donna and Paul Smith