

GARDEN NOTES
GUBLER GARDEN NAME
55 EARLE STREET, LYNEHAM



6-7 NOVEMBER
2021

HISTORY

We moved into this property in 2000. We had previously lived two blocks away and had often walked past and admired this gently sloping North-easterly facing block. Our interest became more serious when the smaller size of the garden we had down the road increasingly led to negotiations, occasionally passionate, about the relative merits of more food plants (Frank) or more flowers (Anna). The marriage was saved when this property came on the market and we agreed that 1,650 square metres could probably accommodate everyone's needs.

When we moved in, the block was rather bare, apart from a handful of large trees and the planting of mixed shrubs down the driveway. The trees have proved to be a great boon, providing shade, structure, and beauty. When we built the extension to the house, it took quite a lot to persuade the builders to keep the large tree (Sycamore?) next to the kitchen, necessitating digging the footings around the roots of the tree, but we've never regretted this decision, especially on hot summer days when it shields us from the morning sun. The deciduous trees on the western side of the house, some of which we planted, are important in cooling the house. We particularly appreciate the very tall pin oak, planted by the previous owners, which is large enough to cast deep shade for a long table of over twenty people at Christmas and on other family occasions.

After we finished the extension we engaged a landscape gardener, who, in addition to having a bobcat, was the possessor of some excellent landscaping ideas. He suggested the three sets of steps leading to the three garden levels, the retaining wall and path at the western side of the house and a number of other good ideas. He undertook that work, including installing the watering system and some of the paving. We were already both reasonably experienced gardeners who grew up in gardening families, so we knew the kinds of plants that we wanted, although this has, of course, evolved over time, and continues to do so.

FEATURES

The garden has grown organically, rather than with any ongoing plan. Over the years we have gradually made more and more paths and paving and have spent many hours cleaning and recycling Old Canberra Red bricks. Camellia and viburnum hedges grow along much of the fence line. At the moment there are a few gaps along the fence and around the house where trees have died or been replaced. Fruit trees are scattered throughout the garden. I

particularly love the “woodland” style garden on the west of the house, which is heavily planted with hellebores, Spring bulbs, peonies, and mollis azaleas. This is sheltered by two old flowering prunus trees which we initially intended to remove, before subsequently falling in love with the structure and leaf colour that they provide. Gardening is, if nothing else, an exercise in remaining flexible, in ideas as well as bodies! In a good year, the roses are also a great joy. One expensive lesson that we have learnt, is that rare plants are rare for a reason.

Conversely, we allow plants that propagate freely to do so and you will see lots of iris, hellebores, violets, California poppies, aquilegia etc. Having such a large block, we have found that it is a useful approach, although, just as weeds are a perennial problem, we do find that some perennials become a weed problem. In some areas of the garden natives are mixed in with exotics. We have recently planted three banksias outside the kitchen window and are looking forward to them growing. We are also fans of croweas, coreas and eremophilas. The very front level of the garden, where we are trying to establish natives, is proving to be challenging, probably because of the shade from the Manchurian pear and the excavating activities of the local choughs.

THE FOOD GARDEN is very productive. We have a number of vegetable beds, some of which are on crop rotation, some of which are permanent, e.g., the asparagus bed. The local possums are not very smart and the low chicken wire barriers around the vegetable garden are sufficient to deter them. Fruit trees that we have are lemons, limes, mandarins, orange, fig, loquat, pomegranate, feijoas, apples, a double-grafted cherry, sour cherry, pear, olives and gages. Berries and currants include blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, boysenberries, tayberries, blackberries, alpine strawberries, redcurrant and blackcurrants. We have three varieties of grapes and four hazelnuts. Some of the more unusual plants we harvest are saffron, lemon myrtle and nigella seeds. We do a lot of freezing, bottling, drying, making jam, chutney, tomato passata and other condiments, which is a most satisfying and delicious pastime. Over the years we have had much pleasure visiting open gardens and coming away with good ideas and we hope that others will get similar enjoyment from our garden.

GARDEN OWNERS

Anna and Frank Gubler