

# GARDEN NOTES

## DAVENPORT GARDEN

### 31 BAINTON CRES, MELBA ACT



26-27 MARCH 2022

#### WELCOME TO OUR GARDEN

The ¼ hectare block backs on to the Mt Rogers Reserve and is accessed by a 40 metre battleaxe driveway.

We have developed the garden over a period of about 25 years. Initially the block only had some native plants including gums and wattles, as well as some fruit trees. There was no back fence – the back yard opened on to the Reserve. The area in front of the house was covered in ivy which grew in a thick mat up the wall.

#### DRIVEWAY

The driveway plantings include a colourful display of two salvias – purple/white “Phyllis Fancy” and purple “Mexican Sage” (*Salvia luecantha*). Both salvias die back in winter. At the junction is the white flowering climber “Mandevilla laxa”.

#### FRONT OF HOUSE

**FRONT GARDEN** - The front garden is protected from frost, so tender plants can be grown there. It is also sheltered from the afternoon sun, and this allows plants such as azaleas and camellias to flourish. Ground covers include the grey “Snow in Summer” as well as Swedish ivy (currently flowering), which is neither Swedish nor an ivy – it is a form of *Plectranthus*. Pink Japanese anemones (windflowers) border the path.

Around the gum tree there are yellow-flowering shrubs of Mexican marigold (*Tagetes lemmonii*). Their leaves give off an aroma of passionfruit when handled. A section of the path is bordered by white Marguerite daisies. Behind them is the tall red and black *Salvia* “Tequila”. The very tall plants with bamboo-like stems are tree dahlias. Nearby is the feathery Silver King Wormwood (*Artemisia ludoviciana*).

**THE DELL** - We call the very shaded area along the fence ‘The Dell’. To the left is a collection of long-leaved *Aspidistra* (Cast Iron Plant). Along the path there are Spider plants and *Billbergia* (Queens Tears). At the end of the walk, beside the cubby house, there are pink, yellow and white *Abutilon* (Chinese Lantern) shrubs.

#### COVERED WALK

Near the entrance to the walk at the side of the house is the pink flowering Cape Mallow (*Anisodonta capensis*). This plant is also growing as a large hedge in the back yard. It is an excellent plant as it is long flowering and trouble-free.

In spring the walk is festooned with yellow flowers on the laburnum trees. There are camellias against the fence and the path is bordered by hellebores. There is a large blue flowering *Dichroa versicolor* shrub on the fenceline. It is sometimes called the evergreen hydrangea.

## **REAR OF HOUSE**

**FRUIT TREES** -There are nectarine and plum trees along the side fence as well as a Eureka lemon which is so tall we received notice to cut it back as it was encroaching on the power lines. The fruit on the quince tree is currently protected by netting. There is an apricot tree next to the stand of silver birch trees. A feijoa tree is behind the car port.

**BACK FENCE** -The back fence is covered in climbing roses including two thornless spring-flowering Banksia roses. We had to remove some thorny climbing roses as they were so difficult to prune. The smaller back gate is overlooked by a large pink flowering Protea tree. The path between the gates is bordered on one side by Rose Champion (*Lychnis coronaria*) and on the other by a grey plant (*Helichrysum italicum*). It is generally called "curry plant" because when the leaves are handled they have a curry-like aroma. However, this plant is not used to make curry powder. Another grey plant at the end of the border is Santolina.

**ROSE BEDS** -The rose bed near the silver birches is bordered by white alyssum. Other flowers include asters and tall pink verbena. The rose on the arch is "Pierre de Ronsard".

The rose near the brick archway is "Crepuscule". Plants beside this rose include a scented-leaved Lemon Verbena tree and the trailing long-stemmed shrub *Helichrysum petiolare* 'Limelight' (Licorice Plant).

The rose bed near the greenhouse is bordered by evergreen red *Salvia* "Huntington" and green Santolina. The bed includes the pink Butterfly Bush (*Gaura* 'Little Janie'). At the end of this rose bed (near the dahlias) is a small solar-powered fountain. The solar panel is on the nearby greenhouse.

**VEGETABLES** -The vegetable garden near the greenhouse currently includes plantings of rhubarb, tomatoes and snow peas. There is a DIY custom built raised vegetable bed beside the wicking beds. Another raised bed is currently used as a sandpit for our grandson.

## **SIDE PATH**

This path is quite steep, so take care when using it and use the handrail. The path is bordered by a hedge of the long-flowering evergreen *Salvia* "Hot lips". On the arch over the path is the excellent thornless pink climbing rose "Kathleen Harrop". At the base of the arch is a scented-leaved *Pelargonium*.

## **WILDLIFE**

As the garden backs on to a reserve, we have often had wildlife entering the garden. Occasionally we have been visited by echidnas, blue-tongued lizards, bearded dragon lizards, kangaroos and even foxes. Numerous birds regularly fly in, including rosellas, magpies, cockatoos, and king parrots.

**WOMBAT** -The most unusual wildlife visitor was a wombat. It visited daily at night for about nine months during 2014. Each night it pushed open the double gates, walked along the back fence and exited through a hole it dug under the fence. A small statue of a wombat near the silver birches commemorates the event.

## TECHNICAL

Water tanks - 1 @ 5 thousand litres, 1 @ 10 thousand litres, 1 @ 3 thousand litres. The 5k litre tank harvests the water from the flat roof and a pump is used to transfer the water to the other tanks or by a simple tap to the hose for watering the front garden. Another pump extracts water from the large tank to water the rear garden area.

Gravity distributed grey water flows from the washing machine and bath via manually switchable flow diverters located under the house. This enables the flow to the garden to be stopped when required. A repurposed swimming pool sand filter acts as a surge tank to allow the grey water to release slowly without storing it.

The small fountain pump near the greenhouse is solar powered via a recycling water system from a tank below the fountain.

The three tier fountain also recycles into a sump via a remote controlled pump.

The front and rear watering systems are tap computer controlled to allow efficient watering.

Roof mounted solar panels, 4.5kW system, generate a good amount of electricity which we try to use through the day as we are on the newer low feed in tariff. Return on investment is about 12 years.

The greenhouse has its own small automatic watering system.

Recycled plant pots are used for propagation. The pots can be turned into mini greenhouses by fully encasing them in the clear plastic envelope in which The Canberra Times is delivered (just the right size).

The gravel path around the gum tree is cream crushed granite from Corkhills at Mitchell.

Thanks for visiting our garden

## GARDEN OWNERS

Maureen and Ian Davenport