

GARDEN NOTES

COOK GARDEN

24 FITZHARDINGE CRES EVATT ACT



DATE OF OPENING

22-23 OCTOBER 2022

WELCOME TO OUR GARDEN

Our garden is a suburban garden on an 1100 sqm block situated in Evatt ACT. The garden is below the street level and is not very visible from the street and therefore very private from the front. It has been designed with many “garden rooms.”

Both Bev and I have been working on the garden and landscaping for 25 years. Given the position of our block, the house and the garden in the street and the proximity to Ginninderra Creek and the lake, we refer to it as “our little oasis in suburbia.”

When we purchased the house, it was quite different garden from the current garden with large grass areas, predominately native plants, large areas of periwinkle and ivy holding together banks and retaining walls. There was also a pool. Given the positioning of the house and garage on the block and the general steepness of the block, access has always been a challenge. We removed the pool and replaced the sleeper retaining walls with bluestone rock walls. To have the quality of soil required to grow the variety of exotic plants in the garden, we have bought in lots of good quality soil as well as added lots of our own compost. We are continually working on improving the quality of our soil with compost and winter green manure crops in the veggie garden.

The garden is predominately a spring to summer garden with many exotic plants including maples, azaleas (four species), camellia japonica cultivars (over twenty varieties), camellia sasanquas, rhododendrons (over twenty special cultivars), peonies both herbaceous and Itoh (twelve varieties), several ‘blackspot buster’ roses, many hellebores, and an organic vegetable garden. There are also many plants that we describe as “little gems” as they are not generally seen in nurseries for sale.

We have also added a three-tiered pond in the garden at the front of the house and provides the ambience from soothing flowing water that can be heard from our bedroom. There are also pieces of garden art spread throughout the garden to add interest.

Considerable time has been spent in planning the garden rooms, included the positioning of plants to match their ideal requirements such as requirements for eastern morning sun,

protection from hot afternoon western sun, soil pH levels, soil moisture levels, frost and wind protection and irrigation requirements.

Rod has installed a Hunter Hydrowise watering system with 24 zones in the main part of the garden. This is driven by an app and that can be run from a mobile phone anywhere in the world. There is also a Davis weather station, that connects to the internet, and this allows the monitoring of rainfall and weather generally when we are away. The veggie garden has its own Hunter controller with 6 zones. Within the gardens there are many different types of sprinkler heads, and this allows the matching of plants with water requirements.

We both like propagating plants for our garden and this provides lots of enjoyment especially, watching your garden grow. Where there is mass planting of the same species, we have generally propagated ourselves.

While we do purchase plants from local nurseries, many of the plants have been sourced from boutique and specialised nurseries by either visit or mail order. We very much enjoy our trips to the Dandenong's and other areas to visit the great variety of specialised nurseries.

Bev and I are passionate gardeners. The garden provides solace, exercise, fresh air, and an escape from life's challenges.

Over several years, we had considered opening our garden and finally, we have decided to do so. We, like other passionate gardeners, enjoy sharing our "fruits of our labor", our learnings, and successes (and our mistakes) and discussing our love of gardening.

As owners, we are delighted to discuss what makes up our garden, the landscaping, the plants, the features, and the watering systems with our visitors.

GARDEN OWNERS

Rod and Bev Cook