

OUR GARDEN – BRINDABELLA VIEWS - 7-8 October 2023

We see our garden primarily as a family garden, it has evolved and changed significantly over the years with children growing up, grandchildren, and family dogs in mind. It all began in April 1982. The block was chosen primarily due to location and size, a generous 1096m² and of course the view. I believe that we were the first home to be moved into in Appel Cres. At the time there were no boundary fences with cows grazing on the back easement and the adjoining Mt. Wanniasa reserve.



Initially the front, including the nature strip, and back yard was all lawn. The vegetable garden has been there in one form or another since day one. The gazebo down the back is also one of the older pieces in the yard. In about 1984 we put in an above ground pool and pool deck, this was located where the sunken garden and pond are now. All the excavation for the pool was done by me using a small electric jack hammer. The pool was disposed of in about 1994. This led to the first major makeover of the back yard, with the sunken garden and pond established.



All the rock used on the backyard retaining walls, garden edging steps, and some front walls were excavated from the site, all the construction work was done by me. On occasions even today we still encounter large rocks when digging around.



The oldest plants are the callistemon on the back fence, melaleuca (paperbark) and the two variegated pittosporum along the northern side fence, they are about 40 years old. Some roses in the front yard are also about 40 years old and come from the Tidbinbilla Space Tracking Station. All up there are around 60 roses in the garden. All the hedges and a great number of other plants were propagated by ourselves.



Access to the back yard has always been difficult. In 2009 we completed some renovations to the house, including the building of the double garage. The only access to the back is now through the gate on the southern side of the house. All materials must be hand carried. Mulch, compost, chicken food and any soil are all bucketed in by hand. The renovation also included the large covered back deck, with fantastic views over the Brindabellas – perfect for sipping a Chardonnay on a summer evening!



The current layout and plantings are about 10 years old, and some even newer. The last major plantings were the espaliered fruit trees along the fence: Satsuma plum, pear tree, Fireman and Delicious apples, fig and Tydeman early apple.

We have started growing herbs in the garden bed underneath the fruit trees. Our first greenhouse was erected in July last year and destroyed in the November 2022 hailstorm. The current greenhouse was rebuilt in May this year.

In the last few years, Nicole with her love of vegetable gardening (and chickens), has taken over responsibility of the vegetable patch and green house. She now collects and grows most of our vegetables from seeds collected. The raised beds were added a couple of years ago as a concession to creaky knees and hips!



The chicken house has been built to withstand foxes or other predators coming in, over, or under the back fence, given that we back onto reserve. So far our only casualty (except through old age) was when a collared sparrowhawk got in through a tiny gap and killed a silkie. Then it couldn't get out again and was beating itself to death against the wire trying to escape. We managed to throw a towel over it and get it out, and eventually it flew away.



The garden is best viewed from the back deck. In spring the view back up the yard from the gazebo is also a delight. The garden and the deck are the scene for many big family events (with our 13 grandchildren) especially at Christmas, and the traditional Easter egg hunt. As you wander around the yard you may notice the mosaic pavers all made by Nicole.



We try to make our garden sustainable and bee and bird friendly. We love cooking and eating our own produce and Nicole is a fantastic cook! All our scraps are either fed to the chickens, the worms, or composted. Nothing is wasted!

We never dreamed our garden would be open to others and so don't have many photos! We hope you enjoy looking around our family garden, which has provided us with many cherished family memories and continues to do so, until it might become too much for us to manage one day.

Peter Badorowski and Nicole Laruder

