

GARDEN NOTES

CAMBREY FARM

18 BELTANA ROAD, PIALLIGO



11-12 NOVEMBER
2023

HISTORY

Cambreya Farm is one of the few remaining properties in Pialligo retaining the character of the original purpose of the area, which allowed leaseholders to develop small farmlets and became an area specialising in vegetable farming, egg raising, apple growing and plant nurseries. The property was established in the 1930s, when the original house and farm outbuildings were built. The current owner's parents (Noel and Enid Eliot) moved to the farm in 1954 and for some years ran a 'barn laid' poultry farm. During the late 1950's most of the tree plantings occurred, most notably the fine driveway avenue of pin oaks. Cottage gardens were planted around the original house and 20 years ago, when the current owners (Bob and Lindy Ross) moved back onto the property a new house and garden were established.

The gardens now range from formal box gardens to more relaxed plantings forming windbreaks and providing garden views from all rooms in the house. Remaining from the original orchard are pear, apple, peach, quince and nectarine trees.

Pialligo, on the Molonglo valley floor, has heavy frosts and is exposed to strong westerly winds that necessitate tough and hardy plants. Although connected to town water, we use only bore water and rainwater to water the paddocks and to provide garden watering. All rainwater is collected in two 10,000l tanks and smaller tanks have replaced the original storm water outlets. A dripper system extends through the garden and vegetable patch. A garden mulcher and our own on-farm supply of alpaca manure provide a wonderful source of compost for the flower and vegetable gardens.

Original gardener Enid planted the older gardens around the old house, and these formed part of the extended gardens we set up when Bob and I built our house in what was then the side paddock. All the brick paving and garden structures were our own work, and it took some time to extend the tree cover into the empty paddock area and provide shelter for the new gardens. We needed to build walls on the western side to reduce the heat and wind damage to new gardens. In the rose garden/box hedge area to the rear of the house we found a cherry laurel hedge was the perfect tough protection we needed for this part of the garden.

Our garden is important because it marries several generations of our family's life on the farm. We are not slaves to our garden; in fact, our garden has to work hard for us in often tough conditions! We like the fact that there are so many different parts of the garden – wild, formal, native, recreational and productive. One of our favourite parts is the western walk (on summer mornings) – it's cool, green, and secluded. Cambrey Farm is a property that reflects over 80 years of farming and garden practices.

FEATURES

At this time of year, the mature plantings of trees are a lovely feature of the garden as they regain their spring for spring: the avenue of pin oaks and mature specimen trees such as golden ash, claret ash, desert ash, liquidambar, Chinese elm, and Judas tree. Newer plantings of pistachio, liquidambar, Japanese maples, and black tupelo are now showing their mature beauty. Paddock trees such as the white river gum and apple box gum are native giants. Many of the garden plants and trees have been sourced from friends' gardens, as they downsize and need a 'new' home for their old favourites. The two magnolias near the double garage, and a young maple near the barn are recent 'adoptions'. It's always a pleasure to be reminded of friendships as you wander in the garden.

The vegetable garden, fruit trees, alpacas and hens all contribute on the farm – and we will have farm produce on sale. An increasingly prominent feature of our property is the old barn, built in the 1930s and recently restored. Sourced from building materials once used in Canberra's World War I POW camp in Fyshwick (who knew??) this interesting building will today also display art/craft works as part of its new life as The Old Bar Gallery.

MAP

We suggest you explore the garden and other areas of interest by following the numbers. In each area you will find more detailed information about your surroundings.



GARDEN OWNERS

Bob and Lindy Ross