

# GARDEN NOTES

## 'HILLSIDE'

### 49 SULLIVAN CRES, WANNIASSA



#### HISTORY

*Hillside* is an informal garden jam-packed with a blend of native and exotic plants collected over 50 years of gardening and 20+ years of working in nurseries. It enjoys sweeping views over the Brindabellas and Tuggeranong Valley and our hilltop location means we have much milder frosts, enabling us to grow plants rarely seen in Canberra.

*Hillside* is our third garden, following earlier gardens at Springwood and Denistone in Sydney. When we bought our house in 1991, the 1200m<sup>2</sup> block was already planted since 1981 with most of the trees you see today as well as fruit trees and the standard shrubs common in the 1980s, most of which were gradually replaced.

Most of the garden's structure was already in place. Over the years bluestone walls have replaced timber ones, three areas of lawn were completely replaced with gardens and paths and an above ground pool made way for the pond garden you see today – a sharp eye can still see remnants of pool fence.

Our block is steep in places and slopes south, good for drainage but it means that the house casts a lot of shade over the garden in winter, so that some beds are in shade in winter but baked by full sun in summer – tricky for plant selection. In fact, our garden overall has a lot of shade so we have little success with roses or with fruit and vegetables – birds and possums also count against these - but we do succeed with herbs.

The block is wedge-shaped with the house turned away from the street to face north. This leaves us with useful open space on most sides of the house except the west, so that we are sheltered from the harsh western sun but exposed to southerly winds. The house and garden stay relatively cool in summer thanks to the shade of more than a dozen trees.

At the top of the driveway we have a bed of cheery annuals changed twice a year, for winter/spring and summer/autumn. Flanking that are beds of mixed shrubs that centre around a large Emu Bush 'Big Poly', Native Hibiscus and Eucalyptus 'Euky Dwarf' on one side and on the other a big silver-blue Grass Tree and tall old Silky Oak. A pebble path takes you past a bed filled with maples, Cliveas, mixed perennials, Daphnes and a huge Blueberry Ash tree.

Continuing down the path you will find a sheltered flat pergola area featuring a water bowl, massed Cliveas, Firefly plant, ferns, a herb garden and a prolific lemon tree. Around the corner are more terraces that step down to a cottage-style garden of annuals, bulbs, perennials, an old Weigela and the climbing Chilean Nasturtium. Head down a steep path past a large Dwarf Native Frangipani to an open area with birdbath, Sydney Rock Orchid, peonies, Heucheras, Acacia 'Burgundy Tips' and a range of native shrubs, all overlooked by *Eucalyptus cinerea*.

The path then forks to two connected areas. To the left, the back corner was a heavily planted orchard when we arrived (hence the odd layout of paths) but a fig is now all that remains. Other notables here are the Dwarf Cherry Laurel 'Otto Luyken' and a large Calothamnus. To the right is the pond garden featuring a 20 year old Gynea Lily, Burrawang, Banksia 'Sentinel', Zierias and a thriving Pincushion Hakea. Terraces and steps lead up to the house and a sheltered area of Bird's Nest Ferns, Dianellas, Rasp Fern, mint bushes and correas. The south side of the house features Camellias, Woolly Bushes, Tea Trees, a Beautyberry and Silver Pear.

Exit the garden next to the carport or if too steep, go back around the house anti-clockwise.

Although we generally prefer Australian native plants, which make up about two-thirds of the garden, we also have a wide interest in unusual plants from around the world, often inspired by seeing them on our travels.

We will have for sale many plants from our garden, raised from cuttings and seedlings.

We hope you enjoy the unusual plants and be inspired to try some yourselves.

## FEATURES

Highlights include the enormous grass tree *Xanthorrhoea glauca* out the front, but as you walk around look out too for the large Blueberry Ash, massed Cliveas, Magnolia 'Scented Pearl', the gorgeous *Rhododendron fragrantissimum*, Gynea Lily, Pincushion Hakea, the north coast Stream Lilies (*Helmholtzia*), Bird's Nest Ferns, Sydney Rock Orchid, Silver Pear, Beautyberry (*Callicarpa*), Burrawangs, Dwarf Native Frangipani, a huge One-Sided Bottlebrush (*Calothamnus*) and the unusual Violet Trumpet Vine (*Clytostoma*). Most of our plants were found in Cool Country Natives, The Heritage Nursery Yarralumla, and The Garden nurseries.

## TOILETS

The nearest public toilets are in the Erindale Centre, 4 mins drive away.

## GARDEN OWNERS

Len Dowling and Jacqui Moulang