

GARDEN NOTES

MY PLACE

44 BROOKMAN STREET TORRENS



28 AND 29
SEPTEMBER 2024

EARLY HISTORY

'My Place' has been a labour of love since November 1975 when it was purchased. Like most gardens it has evolved over the years and seasons as I experimented with different plants, shrubs, trees, shapes and colour making maximum use of the large 1,150 sq m canvas.

Originally, the front garden was grass down to the kerb with a narrow bed of gazanias running in front of the veranda separated by a straight concrete path. Today, that path is buried under a curvaceous red granite path.

The front garden was also full of dandelion weeds which were removed by hand, filling more than thirteen garbage bins. A small bed was created outside the lounge windows. This was graced with the first plant I bought, a **Cho Cho San Camellia**, which is still flourishing near the steps and is kept trimmed beneath the window.

Similarly, the back yard was fence-to-fence grass with a couple of shrubs along the eastern fence. A **Russian Olive** tree and an **Albizzia** were the main focal points along with the mandatory Hills Hoist close to the back door. There was a lot of mowing!

The original occupants lived in the house for eight years and luckily for me had not used their Government allowance of ten trees and forty shrubs. I quickly changed that.

CREATING THE FRONT GARDEN

A small garden started on the northern side of the path has been built on over the years and the front beds extended and re-shaped. The focus has been to avoid tall plants detracting from the wonderful 180-degree view from Isaacs Ridge to Mt Taylor including Black Mountain and its tower.

I also wanted the garden to be easy care with minimum water use. With the latter in mind and with help from my son we installed red granite on the nature strip and path rolling it with a small petrol tin filled with water and levelling with the flat end of the metal rake. Hard work! An inground watering system and drip irrigation were professionally installed at the same time.

The bones of the front garden consist of a **Photinia Robusta** which has been pruned as a tree instead of a shrub, a non-fruiting **Crab Apple**, a **Maple**, two **Weeping Cherries**, half a dozen roses including the lovely **Clea's Rose**, a broad selection of **Azaleas** including a **Lemon Molis** and some evergreen shrubs including pruned hedges of **Pittosporum** and **Viburnum Tinus** along the fence line.

CREATING THE BACK GARDEN

The back garden is very private and surrounded by a variety of evergreen shrubs covering the fence lines, including seven **Pittosporum** species.

The large, paved area came about as a result of a basketball hoop Christmas present, and my sons' demands to be able to shoot and slam dunk the ball! The shape was decided on by using the garden hose until everyone was satisfied that the area was big enough. It has been wonderful for entertaining from BBQ's to birthday drinks.

The pergola with the soft tinkle of the Asian bells is covered with a lovely **Wisteria** which flowers several times a year. Pots containing perennials surround the posts. Under the pergola is also a **Lotus** plant which I am still waiting to flower after three years, but I keep hoping that I will soon see it bloom in all its glory.

The two **Chinese Pistachio** trees look truly magnificent when they show off their wonderful Autumn colours and then provide plentiful shade in the summer months.

Somewhat hidden on the eastern side of the house is a lovely **Dogwood** and an espaliered **Camellia**. Here you find a secluded garden and 'quiet' space that can take you worlds away.

The Chinese water pot fountain is a feature outside the dining room and provides a restful and cooling effect in a somewhat Asian inspired space. Throughout the garden Spring bulb plantings are marked by plastic chopsticks.

A vegetable garden lies behind the garage and shed providing a large enough space for plantings of raspberries, strawberries, mint, asparagus plants, common herbs, and salad greens.

A Military Connection: Some plants in 'My Place' have a brown and green wool ties attached to them. They have a military connection. Some forty years ago I helped in the Mugga Way garden of Lt Col Charles Anderson VC, after his beloved wife died. The garden was the love of her life and contained some unusual shrubs which he invited me to take cuttings from. The plants marked with the brown and green wool ties, his regiment's colours, are from his garden and I am proud to have them in mine especially as the Colonel's house and garden has recently been demolished.

Garden Help: It would be remiss of me not to mention my wonderful gardener James who is here on time every two weeks come rain or hail throughout the year. He does an excellent job of pruning the hedges and keeping the garden under control. I thank him sincerely for his ongoing horticultural advice and help.

Charity: Unfortunately, my late father suffered from Parkinson's. I would like my charity to be Research into Parkinson's Disease in Australia, known as The Hospital Research Foundation Group Parkinson's.

WHAT MY GARDEN MEANS TO ME

My garden is full of memories and brings me joy and peace daily. It has been a place to bring up children with space to play outdoors and explore. It has been a journey of learning about plants and their survival.

No matter what is going on in my life or in the world, a walk in the garden through its different 'rooms' brings me calmness and clarity and a true sense of what matters in life. It gives me continuing pleasure through its changing faces and I hope you enjoy it too.

GARDEN OWNER

Chris Parks