

GARDEN NOTES  
TEACHERS' REST  
5 MACEDON CR  
PALMERSTON



23 AND 24  
NOVEMBER 2024

We were both teachers serving in the west of NSW for over 30 years, living in a variety of country towns. We decided to retire to Canberra and purchased the house and garden in June 2012. Walking around the property in June 2012, I remarked to Sue, "This garden will keep me occupied". Prior to our actual retirement we had a tenant and employed a gardener to come in each quarter and keep the garden trimmed and tidy. This seemed like a reasonable practice as it was too much to expect the tenant to maintain the extensive collection of roses (over 120 roses). We moved to the house and garden July 2016. Work commenced in the garden quite soon as I had had 4 years to consider what I wanted to work towards.

The guiding philosophy of my garden plans was that every day of the year there should be flowers somewhere in the garden for Sue to pick and enjoy.

The garden was planned and planted by the original owners in 1994. Dominated by roses, the garden beds curved around the house and boundaries. It was very much a Spring garden with masses of flowering bulbs, mainly jonquils and bearded iris appearing before the roses bloomed. There were few trees as they had aged and been removed. The magnolia in the front garden and the calamondin in the back garden remained and we had planted three Manchurian pears in the western garden when we purchased the property in 2012.

The first project was the construction of the garden shed with the assistance of the family, as I had a double hernia at the time. Once that was completed there has been a planned program of tree planting, both ornamental and fruiting around the garden. We have planted almost 50 trees both in ground and in pots. The garden has moved from a Spring flowering garden of roses, spring bulbs and irises to a more full year garden with summer bulbs, hellebores, peonies and dahlias taking the flowering period across the whole year. The garden is my artistic, design palette. New garden borders, renewed pathways and a new garden shed have contributed to the hard architecture of the garden. Both physical and intellectual exercise to keep me active.

In the 8 years we have been here the garden has matured and generally flourished. There are still areas of GUR ('ground under repair' as they signal on golf courses) and other areas that will benefit from some renewal. The larger maintenance has reduced with mulching replacing weeding, and I find that an hour or so each day keeps the garden in good order. It is very enjoyable to talk with people who walk down the street as I am working in the front garden. As with all gardens this one is a work in progress, because plants grow and change

size and shape as well as expire (and there is always something that will look good in that spot.)

Roses dominate the flowering plantings. There are over 120 including rosa rugosa, hybrid tea, climbing and standards, David Austins and Delbards. The Horticultural Society rose pruning workshop was very useful when I first started the pruning. It takes about three days and provides a ute load of green waste. Bearded iris are generally lifted and divided in March and I work around these two major activities for the rest of the year. Spring bulbs have flourished and I find that each year I am lifting large clumps, replanting a few and distributing the rest.

There are now 48 trees in the garden, in ground and in pots. A holiday in Japan showed that a small plot can grow a large number of trees and so I have planted for leaf shape, colour and texture. Pruning is carried out as needed. Fruiting trees are concentrated along the southern fence and south western corner. Each year we are getting bigger harvests of pears, apples, cherries and nectarines. Citrus fruits are doing well especially the calamondin tree. Vegetables are planted in the vegetable patch but not exclusively and if there is a space I am happy to plant among the flowers. Canberra has a great climate for most vegetables.

The seasonality of the garden is a highlight. There is always some new aspect to contemplate and the change from the bare sticks of winter to the lush spring growth is a reminder of the bounty of nature. The garden is very good for my mental and physical well-being as well as providing enjoyment for all those who visit or just walk by on a sunny morning. Looking at older photos illustrates a surprising amount of change in the garden.

Is there a master plan? To enjoy the scents, sounds and sights from different perspectives around the garden because this is a garden, not a yard.

## TOILETS

Nearest public toilet, Palmerston Shops, Tiptree Circuit.

## GARDEN OWNERS

Sue and Steve Chapman