

GARDEN NOTES

HIDDEN LAKE

95 MORRISON RD BYWONG NSW



1-2 NOVEMBER
2025

HISTORY

Welcome to "Hidden Lake" property and garden.

When we purchased Hidden Lake in early 2005 the 40 acre property was an over grazed sheep farm with only a smattering of native trees and the 5 acre lake (constructed in the 1920/30s) was only bordered by a few black and weeping willows. The house garden was mainly lawns with a few sparsely arranged shrubs and trees.

In the intervening 20 years we have attempted to transform the property and lake into a significant wetland and woodland habitat for all manner of wildlife while still maintaining a number of paddocks for grazing livestock. We've recently destocked due to dry conditions.

Part of the transformation began with the construction of a large island in mid 2005 made possible due to the prevailing drought conditions and low water levels in the lake. The island is now fully established with trees and shrubs serving as a safe haven for the many wetland birds that frequent the lake. Linking the lake with neighbouring pockets of remnant woodlands we have planted several thousand trees and shrubs forming windbreaks and wildlife corridors allowing animals to feed and travel safely across the landscape.

Our property is now utilised regularly by Wildcare Queanbeyan Inc as a release site for all manner of rehabilitated wildlife including birds, turtles and lizards. Over the years a number of rare and endangered species have been sighted here including rakalis (native water rat), sea eagles, gang gangs and yellowtail cockatoos, crested grebes, musk, freckled and whistling ducks, a powerful owl and a squirrel glider. In fact, we have recorded over 125 species of birds over the last 20 years. Many eastern long necked turtles called the lake home and we have been lucky to observe many turtles nesting in our paddocks and have filmed turtle eggs being laid.

The development of Hidden Lake has been a labour of love over the past 20 years with all but the deck being designed and constructed by ourselves. The house and garden which covers approximately 1600 square metres in area sits at an altitude of 760 metres above sea level and as a consequence the climate here is extremely harsh with high winds, severe frosts and temperature extremes from -10°C to 38°C. Combined with shallow, skeletal soils, it makes for difficult gardening with only the most hardy of species surviving. The house garden consists of a mix of natives and exotic plants with some sculptural elements, a large deck, an aviary, an arbour, a fire pit zone and a number of water features and ponds, all with a commanding view of the lake. There are flower and rock gardens throughout and large bordering hedges.

During times of drought the lake level has dropped significantly. This has allowed us to construct two smaller "islands" that can be viewed from the deck. One of these islands has been utilised as a golf hole and regularly tests the golf prowess of ourselves and our friends. A work in progress over the last few years has been the establishment of a bush golf course on the property, comprising eleven artificial turf tees and sand greens. Unfortunately, no golf is to be played over the open gardens weekend.

A large vegetable garden, chicken runs and animal house are a short walk from the house. For those more active types, a supplied map guides visitors on a meandering path which circumnavigates the lake, eventually returning to the house. Approximately 900 metres return, it is a relative flat walk with two bridges and lovely vistas of the lake, house and farm.

We've decided to open our farm and gardens for public viewing to hopefully demonstrate how a small acreage farm can be transformed from a barren rundown grazing property into one which supports not only domestic animals, but a myriad of native plants, mammals, birds and reptiles. All proceeds raised over the weekend will be donated to our local wildlife group – Wildcare Queanbeyan Inc. We hope you enjoy your visit to Hidden Lake and take advantage of the many spots dotted around the farm to enjoy your own picnic or take advantage of the Wildcare sausage sizzle. An information booth outlining Wildcare's many activities can be perused at the house and any cash donations would be greatly appreciated. Please note that Morrison Rd is a no through gravel shared private road so please drive slowly to reduce dust nuisance and respect our neighbours privacy.

MAP

To be provided at a later date.

TOILETS

A porta loo will be located on site

GARDEN OWNERS

Murray and Janelle Goodridge