

# LOUISE AND IAN'S GARDEN

## 35 WONGoola CLOSE

### O'CONNOR



#### HISTORY

The house, built in the early 1960s, and the established garden came to be ours in August 1998. Two magnificent *Eucalyptus mannifera*, Brittle gum framed either side of the front garden drawing you into the large 1248m<sup>2</sup> lot. Unfortunately, these trees were removed in 2017. Others have been planted in their places, a fig and a pomegranate. The layout of the front garden before the lawn area has not changed except for the addition of a *Magnolia grandiflora* that was originally our Christmas tree in a pot and the inclusion of two buddlejas. *Buddleja davidii*, 'Black Knight' is planted behind the retaining wall. *Buddleja x weyeriana* 'Golden Glow' is facing the street. I planted an apricot that occasionally bears fruit. The view of the garden from the kitchen table was designed to give my husband Ian pleasure, he particularly liked yellow flowers. In addition, a small memory garden was planted for Sandy, our second labrador. It has a pink and yellow theme featuring a Daybreaker rose, pink gerberas, *Hemerocallis fulva* lily and spring tulips and hyacinths.

Major changes to the back garden came about when the house was renovated starting in 2021. The swimming pool was removed and three underground water tanks were installed to provide water for the garden. The first design was completed by Michelle Elvins Landscape Designs and later modified with the help of landscaper Pete Jeffery to accommodate more curves in the garden and changes in plantings. My art background fostered the plan of a mainly colour themed renovated garden. To help connect the front to the back the gate was repositioned to allow plantings along the green wall beside the driveway. A small group of plants replaced the rubbish build up in the meter garden.

The orchard and vegetable garden are on the lower level of the garden. Existing in the garden were plum trees. We added cherries, almond, peach and fig trees and berries along the retaining wall.

#### FEATURES

Many features are not described in the garden but include the purple, magenta, blue, yellow and red gardens. I am grateful for help from Lalhmingmawia Hmar (Mawia), Bill Brown and many friends who have contributed plants and labour to the garden.

#### TOPIARY

I have always been a fan of topiary from European grand gardens to the giant animals in Singapore's Garden by the Bay. A more conservative approach in scale was taken on a trip to Tasmania to Unique Topiary in Penguin in 2012. We bought a labrador frame to start my

adventure in topiary. To honour and remember our first labrador, Winnie, I started the topiary dog with *Lonicera nitida*. Winnie was joined in the front garden by the wombat, started in 2017. In October 2020 I commissioned sculptor Dan Lorrimer to make a stainless steel salt cellar to remember my late husband, his love of salt and quirky humour. It is a work in progress but the *Lonicera* has reached the top.

### **LEMON TREE**

A much loved large Meyer lemon tree once stood in the space now occupied by the new house addition. It was heavily pruned and moved to its current spot in the lime citrus garden in March 2021. It was joined by one of the many grafts made by Engall's Nursery in Sydney of the same tree and a Tahitian lime. Moving the tree was the start of the major garden renovation in June 2022.

### **STAIR GARDEN**

Having a new staircase allowed me to create a shaded space. I retained a mophead hydrangea and two azaleas for the space. They were joined by a black lace and oak leaf hydrangea. Climbing up the support is *Clematis armandii*. The raised bed has *Lamium maculatum* poking their flowers between the steps. Hellebores are scattered as well as hard ferns *Blechnum spicant* from my son's property.

### **PINK GARDEN**

There is a pink rose, pink *Luci azalea*, pink *Gaura lindheimeri*, marshmallow dahlia, candy button thyme, sweet peas pink geranium and sweet peas. Directly opposite the pink area on two walls of the house a stainless steel diamond trellis has been installed. Planted in two different pots are *Jasmine polyanthum* and *Clematis armandii*. These vines are intended to grow over the trellis on two walls providing a pink fragrant entrance into my studio.

### **CREPE MYRTLE GARDEN**

This area is directly opposite the house and has caused the most problems. The first planting of this section had to be redone. The soil was not good, poor drainage. After being amended it was replanted in October 2024. The main feature are three crepe myrtles, *Lagerstroemia indica*: Tuscarora, Zuni and Hot Red. They are balanced by groups of *Hebe buxifolia*, Icing Sugar and Marie Antoinette. Intermingled are various Callistemons.

### **ORANGE GARDEN AND WATER FEATURE**

*Liquidambar styraciflua*, Sweetgum is the largest element in the back garden with orange flowering plants below. During the renovation a special scaffold was built around it to access the corner of the house. The conditions for growing things at its base lead to the planting of the *Clivea caulescens* gifted by my neighbours, the Rawsons. The existing *Pyrostegia venusta* also with bright orange trumpet flowers lead to the planting of all things orange including a half circle of *Canna x generalis Pretoria*, Bengal Tiger from my friend Lilli with *Kniphofia uvari* on the inside. Finding a commercial sculptural water element to fit with the sandstone that formed a retaining wall for the sweetgum was difficult so my landscaper and I decided to make one from a huge sandstone boulder. He carved and fitted the water accessories.

**TOILETS – THE NEAREST PUBLIC TOILET IS LOCATED AT THE O'CONNOR SHOPS.**

**GARDEN OWNER – LOUISE HAMBY**

