

FORREST BOWER

11-13 TALBOT ST, FORREST ACT



19-20 SEPT 2026

GARDEN HISTORY

Forrest Bower takes its name from the family of Satin Bowerbirds that frequents the street, but also from the enchanting universal atmosphere of a forest bower retreat. The original garden around the main house has flourished for 25 years, while the extension into the adjacent block beside the new granny flat is just a year old. Conceived as a "world garden," it weaves together ideas from diverse cultures, adorned with artworks that reflect its owners' travels and life stories. Forrest Bower unfolds across ten distinct garden spaces:

1. FRONT OF HOUSE GARDEN

This mature heart of the property shelters soft *Hellebores* and quiet, shady seating beneath four majestic, sixty-year-old trees: a *Linden*, a *Plum Blossom*, a *Rowan*, and a *Box Elder*. Enjoy a quiet refreshment here while looking down toward the tranquil reflection pool.

2. WOODLAND WALK

Here begins the newer landscape, with a paved path winding through a planned deciduous woodland. Established *Ginkgo*, *Crab Apple*, and *Magnolias* are joined by young *Japanese Maples*, and *Cherry & Apricot Blossoms*. Cool and shady in summer, glowing and warm in autumn, this walk bursts into life each spring with blue, white, and orange plantings beneath pink blossoms.

3. WALLED GARDEN

Low surrounding walls embrace a sun-drenched terrace anchored by a long reflection pool, where a ceramic ball artwork from Bellagio floats. Overhead, a pink *Clematis Montana* drapes over a pergola dining area, bathed in the rich scent of *Gardenias* and the delicate background patter of water. The palette here evokes serenity and clarity in pastel yellows, creams, and oranges.

4. GRAND LAWN

From the terrace, a grand vista opens over a sweeping lawn. A water channel—inspired by Moorish water gardens—cascades down from the Walled Garden, forming a striking axis, flanked by *Bonica roses* and drawing the eye toward a gazebo. An ideal setting for weddings and gatherings, the lawn is framed by sumptuous English borders of dreamy pastel pink and lavender.

5. SECRET GARDEN

Enclosed by recently planted hedges, this secluded sanctuary will in time become a hidden retreat. Four symmetrical beds surround a central bower seat, offering a charming scene that can also be admired from the Walled Garden above. Transplanted fifty-year-old *Camellias* shelter against the east-facing wall. Cut flowers are grown here for indoor vases along a lovely, long-reaching vista.

6. VEGGIE PATCH

This productive centre of Forrest Bower features U-shaped, raised wicking beds housed inside a walk-in shade cloth tunnel, built above a 120,000-litre underground water reservoir. A cold frame crafted from recycled windows protects young tomato seedlings come September, while a small shrine to Shiva sits near a ceramic artwork by a Southern Highlands artist. Beyond, a berry patch yields *raspberries* and *blackberries* on trellises. The powerhouse of the garden, a five-bay composting system sits behind the cottage. (Restrooms are located here.)

7. UNDER THE ELM

A spectacular 65-year-old *Golden Elm* casts a sweeping, leafy canopy over geometric *Box* hedges filled with a calming palette of green and white. In winter and spring, linger in the dappled light among fragrant *Jonquils* and *Daphne*; in summer, retreat into the cool shade alongside crisp white *Hydrangeas*. Mediterranean ceramics sit alongside meditative shrines to Krishna and Ganesha from India and Bali. Nandi the bull, atop a temple pillar, gazes back along a long vista toward Shiva.

8. CLOISTER COURTYARD

Courtyard gardens hold a timeless appeal across cultures, and this space serves as the peaceful inner sanctum of Forrest Bower. Pause a moment in quiet reflection to listen to the soft trickle of water, take in the quiet serenity, and admire the structured *Box* hedges beneath a *Wisteria*-draped pergola. The eclectic artworks gathered here evoke the curious treasures of a bowerbird's nest.

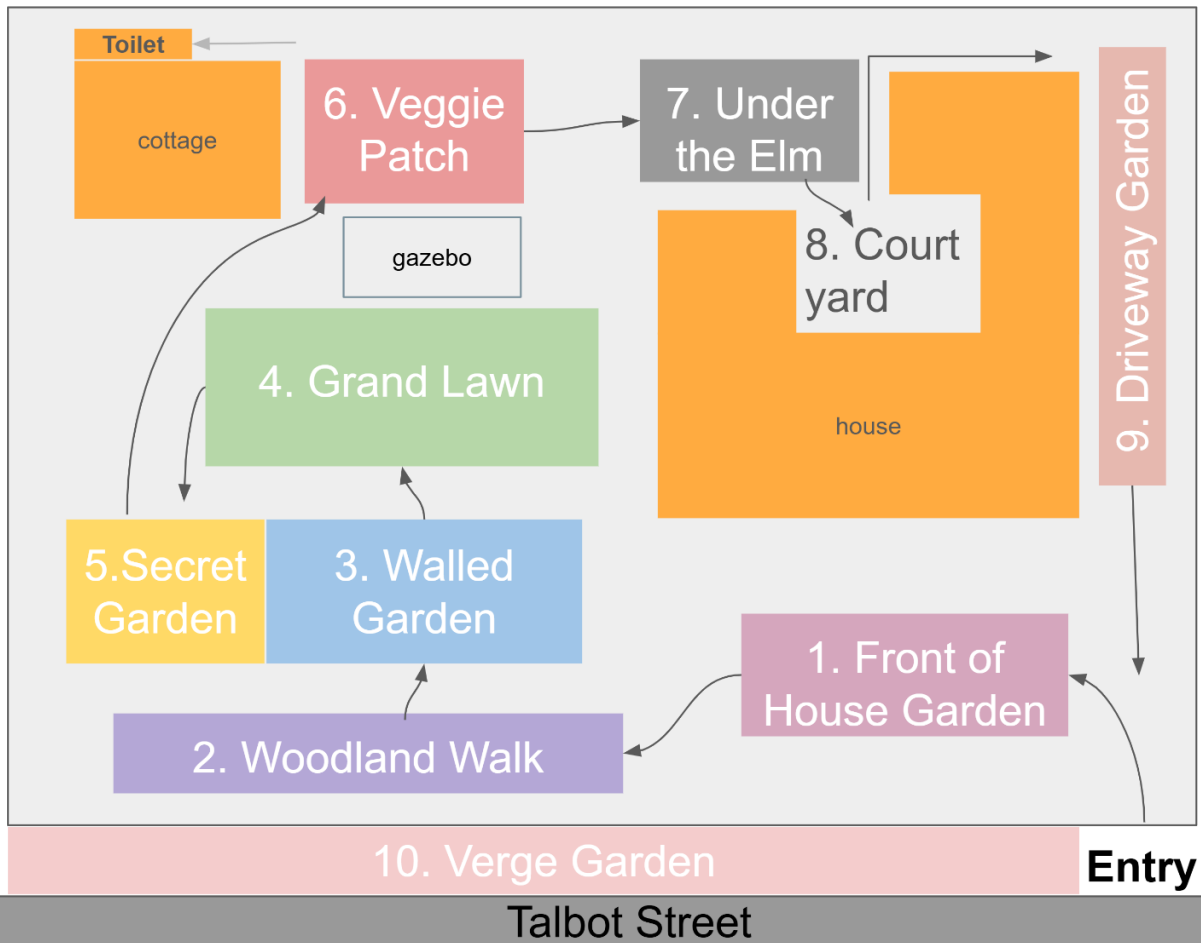
9. DRIVEWAY GARDEN

Ascending the driveway, look for espaliered *Pear* and *Plum* trees trained neatly against the wall—a blend of utility and beauty that rewards the gardener's careful and constant trimming. Turning back offers a view down toward a sculpted granite artwork from Kochi.

10. VERGE GARDEN

Before departing, wander the pathways through the Verge Garden. Transformed during the drought of the early 2000s, the former lawn on the street verge has become a lively mixed border inviting passersby to stop and smell the roses and glimpse the garden through the antique gates.

SITE MAP



PLEASE NOTE

- Toilets are available behind the cottage at the far back corner of the property.
- This garden contains two water features - please be careful with young children.
- Our bee colony collapsed this winter because of the varroa mite 😞. There are still lots of bees. Be careful if you are allergic.
- Security cameras film visitors to the garden.