



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

Open Gardens South Australia Welcomes you to **The Garden at Wilpena Street**

Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 October, 2017 41 Wilpena Street, Eden Hills

We bought this house in 2003 dreaming of creating a romantic English-style garden. We inherited a tennis court in disrepair and an overrun block which sloped in two directions, so we embarked upon our "ten year plan" to build a garden ourselves with the help of friends and a few contractors for the big jobs.

A designer gave us guidance on levels to tame the sloping block by using retaining walls and steps to form distinct garden rooms. This involved some serious excavation work and we will never forget the day a giant earth-mover left the block completely bare. Not a blade of grass in sight. We really were starting from scratch!

Fourteen years later there are eight different levels, Rob has brought in 150 tons of topsoil by wheelbarrow, our stonemason has laid 180 metres of retaining walls and Dave has planted more than 1,100 hedging plants. We've laid three lawns, planted 68 trees, laid hundreds of pavers and built a fishpond.

As you enter the garden you walk through a woodland area thanks to the established trees, so we've planted hydrangeas, camellias and the stunning purple mist flower (*Eupatorium megalophyllum*) that loves the dappled shade.

From the lawn you can probably spot "The Urn". It was a challenge getting it in the right spot and vertical; it's best viewed from the far end of the lawn walk (through the gates to the back garden).

The trees in the front border include Silver Birches and a Liquid Amber, chosen to help drink the water which runs off the property in this direction.

The rose garden includes Children's Rose against the house and a David Austin Rose called Radio Times below. On the other side of the path the roses change from pink to yellow and are under planted with forget-me-nots and daffodils in early spring.

After last year's wet and windy winter, we lost one of the pencil pines at the top of the steps, so the new baby is playing catch up to its older brother.

We wanted to have an entrance hall to the main garden so we created a green and white themed fountain garden. There's a hedge of Japanese box beneath Hedgerow Maples and Lamarque roses cover the fence.

Straight on is the lawn walk, the length of a cricket pitch in subtle tribute Ian and Greg Chappell's great uncle, Doug Richardson, who once owned the house. Rumour has it that the boys practiced their bowling and batting skills in this garden!

We wanted this to be the most English part of the garden, so that meant creating shade. We planted trees as early as we could in the plan. It's hard to believe that none of these trees are more than 13 years old. "Larry the actor", a bronze we commissioned to represent Rob's desire for a statue in the garden and Dave's love of theatre, stands beneath a grove of Ginkos. Further east there's a Chanticleer Pear and a signature Gleditsia behind the bench at the far end which lines up with "The Urn" - you can check it if you like - but we're not moving either of them!

Open Gardens South Australia Inc: is a not for profit organisation opening private gardens to the general public. The purpose of Open Gardens SA is to educate and promote the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening in South Australia and to build strong public support for the development of gardens.

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On the south side four Prunus Oakfield Spires have delightful blossom in spring and spectacular autumn colour.

The veggie patch includes cordoned pear, quince, mulberry and fig trees to provide summer shade. A row of stone fruit trees and climbing Queen Elizabeth roses cover the brush fence.

The 'workers' in the beehive provide us with honey twice a year and certainly help to pollinate the garden and the 'girls' in the chook house give us enormous eggs. They've been banned from garden in the lead up to today or the veggies wouldn't stand a chance!

We've had trouble establishing a Cherry Laurel hedge to separate the veggie patch from the top lawn, so we're trying a Magnolia hybrid called Princess Cinderella, which promises drought tolerance, easy clipping into a hedge plus creamy white, lightly perfumed flowers twice a year. We'll see how it goes.

Rob enjoys popping mix-and-match annuals around the lawn for a splash of summer colour including foxgloves and poppies. Two Crepe Myrtles frame "gin and tonic" corner where we like to pause and reflect on what we've achieved during a long day's gardening!

A Muraya hedge screens the pool and two Robinias provide fresh lime green foliage. These trees are very popular with the local parrots who are determined to strip the top branches each spring. Bring out the water-cannon!

The circular courtyard leads off the sitting room windows framed with Pierre de Ronsard climbing roses, chosen for their superb flowers but no scent so the bees aren't drawn into the house.

A trio of Capital Pears are reaching for the sky at an amazing rate from the Viburnum and Japanese Box hedges. The Lipstick Maple in the corner provides enough shade for more hydrangeas, nowadays; it was a very hot spot before.

Our courtyard and pool area have a Mediterranean resort feel with pots of citrus, bougainvillea, dwarf Oleanders and a Duranta hedge running the length of the lap pool (a rare bargain!).

Perhaps after fourteen years hard labour we can begin to simply potter in our garden; mowing the lawn, picking veggies, doing a little weeding and pruning here and there? That's not very likely.

These days we are replacing and re-thinking plants that didn't quite work or have given up the ghost. After all, a gardener's work is never at an end!

Open Gardens South Australia is aiming to significantly reduce its impact on the environment and we hope you support us in this endeavour. Please return your garden notes as you leave so they can be reused and recycled.

The gardens that open for us are chosen to reflect a great diversity of styles and may even challenge the conventional view of what constitutes a garden. While aspects of a garden may not be to your taste, we urge you to celebrate this diversity. Please remember you are visiting a private home and show respect and sensitivity for the owners who have so generously shared their garden with you. Thank you.