



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

Open Gardens South Australia Welcomes you to **TREVILYAN ALBA HAME**

Sunday 21 April 2019 3 Fantasia Drive, Angle Vale

“Alba Hame” refers to our new home made from nature’s compressed seashell blocks, commonly called Mt. Gambier stone. It is lighter in weight and has insulative properties.

Our new home was built in the latter half of 2014 on a 1800 sq m (half an acre) block as part of an estate of approximately 35 houses in the centre of Angle Vale. The original 20 acres being sown to cereals.

My interest in gardening started when I was quite young, collecting acacia seeds, pouring boiling water over them and hearing them “crackle and pop” and then planting them along the sandy road to the school bus stop on Robe Road., Wattle Range in the South East. None survived!

My mother was my inspiration; she loved gardens and especially roses, as I do. My family moved from our mixed farm when I finished school at the end of 1959 to a farm at Banana, Central Queensland. From sand to rich red soils and black river flats! A new home was built and a garden was quickly established and fertilised by my 200 laying chooks and a pig enterprise. 70 roses went in which was something of a novelty up there at the time.

In 1968 we came back to SA to Two Wells where I farmed on 24 plus ha. The piggery was surrounded by lawns and Meiland “Coral” landscape roses. In 2014 these roses were divided up, planted into 10 litre buckets and 6 months later taken to ‘Alba Hame”, Angle Vale and planted in the front garden the following year.

Our house block was a depot for heavy earth moving machinery during the estate’s road and drainage construction. During the wet winter, there were deep ruts, oil patches and concrete truck rinses.

We excavated 175 tonnes of pure clay overburden from the front area of the house and replaced it with 125 tonnes of an 80/20 soil mix of drift sand and clay and mixed by volume with one part of Jeffries black compost to four parts of the 80/20 loam. This was for the roses and not for the front lawns. The lawns did not have the compost.

Most of the garden is watered weekly by a six station automatic dripper system via a pump, once a week. We have an underground bio-digester installed in the front garden for all waste water. The resulting aerobic effluent is automatically pumped to the 5000 litre fertigation tank. This is topped up with rainwater and/or mains water from the 90,000 litre large storage tank at the bottom of the garden and once a month, humates, urea, a soluble complete fertiliser and seasoil is added.

The back garden has Lesley’s influence as she prefers hedges and more formality. I managed to secure my 200 square metres of bushland! Recently, Lesley has become interested in the vegetable garden, now with the 3rd planting of sweetcorn which she loves eating. I have a second planting of small tomatoes in. I love the intense flavour for my lunches. Field peas are scattered throughout the vegie garden and together with brassica species helps as a break crop to control “nasties” in our living soil.

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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Five fruit trees have been planted. A dwarf Moorpark apricot for blanching and freezing, an improved Elberta for bottled preserves, a Valencia orange for marmalade and fruit juice throughout the year. Also a dwarf Meyer lemon to add to the marmalade and for lemon cordial and a third try at a dwarf Emperor mandarine, which will help to block out the tank.

The prominent low native hedge is *Agonis flexuosa* "nana" which is less formal and is used to tie in the native garden to the formal garden. Within this setting is a wooden pergola with bush roses and wisteria which seems to work well. Other hedges in the garden are- *Jasmin grandiflorum*, *Syzygium 'Big Red'*, *Pittosporum 'Wonder Screen'* and creeping lantana.

There are 2 "rooms" which were planted to dwarf kangaroo paw species as fill ins to the *Lomandra* native grasses. The kangaroo paws were an utter failure. I now have a hotchpotch of salvias and *Agastache 'Sweet Lillie'*, the latter is an absolute delight! *Gaura* can be found everywhere and is of good value, especially for bees.

All five lawns were established by planting clods from the piggery garden. The lawn was a Hodges Oval mixture of both winter & summer grasses with strawberry clover which stood the test of time- close on 50 years in fact! Inside the western fence are four silver birches which will allow sun in winter for the back lawns.

There is a litter of ten porcelain pigs throughout the garden, two water features, a windmill and a "happy" man in the vegie garden with two tin roosters.

We purposely went for an open carport instead of a closed in garage. We have a living wall of red & white mandevillas in 20 litre tubs along the eastern side. The back wall is completely open and looks out onto a perspex plaza with the water feature and tropical plants in tubs.

I have "adopted" the neighbour's established river gum which gives a sense of maturity for the front garden and a reminder and a nostalgia of my country roots. When we come home and the garage door goes up, we can see the entire back garden- what a thrill!

I hope you enjoy our garden and to relax with our Devonshire tea, made and served by my Rotary Club of Playford. Your contribution will go to clean up the last vestige of polio in the world- we are nearly there!

Robin, former member of the Society for Growing Australian Plants and the *Eremophila* Study Group.

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.