



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

Open Gardens South Australia

Welcomes you to

TROPICAL COOINDA

Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 March 2019

34 Cooina Crescent, Athelstone

We welcome you to our property "Tropical Cooina". Cooina is the Aboriginal word meaning "Happy or Meeting Place".

We are the owner builders of this house, and moved in 16 years ago. At first we concentrated on completing building necessities such as bathrooms and verandas before we tackled the garden.

The site is on a 1 in 4 slope on bedrock with only 1 metre maximum of rocky clay topsoil, cut and filled to form the different levels. Because of the steepness of the slope, establishing a garden was going to require considerable more effort than just digging a hole and planting something.

The front garden has been retained using manufactured retaining blocks and filled with the cut material from the block. The tropical style plants together with the facade of the house give a tropical Queensland kind of vibe. Red *Russelia equisetiformis* drape down to mask some of the wall and give colour that complements the hibiscus flowers. These attract a variety of birds, which can be spied from the elevated veranda in the morning and late afternoon, that bathe in and drink from the bird bath. The bamboo was struck from a clump found along the River Torrens and strangely gets koalas resting in it. The Adelaide Zoo also harvests it to help feed the pandas Wang Wang and Funi.

Frangipanis are everywhere and, when in flower, the aroma from the many different varieties is quite hypnotic. There are also varieties of palms, gingers and canna lilies spread throughout the property along with ponds and water features containing fish and a tortoise as well as a frog pond containing tadpoles.

At the rear of the house retaining walls and planter beds had to be built on the cut solid rock. We decided to build our own using recycled materials. We used discarded bricks, old concrete driveways and rocks which were mortared together and rendered over with the addition of colour oxide to replicate the colour and form of the exposed natural rock. This process was also used with steel reinforcing to form the waterfall and planters which hide the swimming pool pump and equipment with the shower and toilet attached. There is a distinct Balinese feel and if something is not square, straight or plumb it doesn't matter.

Tropical plants fill the planters, however in the foot hills plants are blasted by gully winds most nights in summer so broad leafed plants are frequently shredded. Despite this we have managed to grow little bananas and papaya. Some hardier plants like agaves and cycads are used for ease of maintenance. Plants that are sheltered stand a better chance but are unwilling to grow above fence height. Bromeliads are grown everywhere as a home for Eastern Brown Tree Frogs and it is

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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rewarding to see and hear them when watering the garden in the evening. *Adenium obesum* (Desert Rose) and Anthuriums are kept in pots so they can be moved and protected in the cold weather.

Our inspiration for this type of garden is derived from our love of Bali to where we travel often. The beauty of this Bali extends not only from the plants and flowers but to the people, their art and their way of life. This can be seen in some of the detail of the sandstone wall reliefs, the terracotta gantengs on the roof of the pavilions and wooden carvings on the toilet door. For us the centre of our backyard living is the pavilion which we use as our gathering place for meals, entertaining or just relaxation. Accoutrements reflect the style along with souvenirs from other tropical countries that we have visited and inspired us.

The Balinese theme extends to water pots filled with lilies, lotuses and rushes. Around the swimming pool there are dwarf bougainvilleas in pots and a sun shade made from coconut and bamboo. Details like leaf imprints in the concrete stairs, a pebble formed hibiscus flower on the outdoor shower floor and beach rocks, coral and shells that form the walls of the temple inspired toilet help complete the feel.

The steel staircase leads to the latest addition to our garden. This area was bought with the intention of being a domestic area only, for storing fire wood and growing fruit and veg with chooks for eggs and compost, but the view and serenity was so lovely it seemed only fitting to have somewhere to take it in, so another pavilion was built surrounded by more tropical plants. It is a tranquil place to relax and watch the vegies grow. A fire pit has also been incorporated into the design as we enjoy cooking on and sitting around an open campfire. Privacy from the neighbours is provided by screening constructed from split bamboo and woven grape vine.

Part proceeds from our open garden will go to The Wombat Awareness Organisation which is a non-profit organisation specialising in the rescue, rehabilitation and advocacy of the Southern Hairy-nosed Wombat.

Thank you for coming and sharing our “Happy Place” and we hope you enjoy it as much as we do.

Tania and John

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.