



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

Open Gardens South Australia

Welcomes you to

The Glasshouse

Saturday 5th & Sunday 6th October, 2024

Introduction

Annette & Bill welcome you to their garden oasis. We purchased the property in April 2014 and when we first saw it, we recognised that it had great potential, being a blank canvas from which we could create a wonderful ornamental and productive garden.

Our aim was also to create a tranquil oasis and relaxing haven with elements of sustainability – chooks, veggie beds and fruit trees along with a place to enhance our wellbeing. We hope that those who visit our garden will also experience this sense of calm and tranquillity that it provides us.

Garden History & Development

When we purchased the property the bare bones were in place, with garden walling and stonework having been completed in the garden area below the drive and on the sloped bank leading down to the footpath. This saved an enormous amount of time and effort. We decided to concentrate on establishing the front garden sections before tackling a rather wild and untouched area at the back of the property.

Prior to commencing work in the garden, we agreed that it would be useful to have someone come and provide some advice on garden design and appropriate plantings. Sophie Thomson visited the garden in September 2014 and provided great advice. Taking on board her advice, we also made the decision to remove several gum trees (rather small and spindly ones) in the areas where we wanted to establish gardens beds and leave a perimeter of gums boarding the property as we wanted to retain that bushland feel.

Work commenced firstly on the garden area bordering Second Rd, called the Terraces. This was established with native and Mediterranean plantings and a dedicated rose garden with a feature Pierre De Ronsard climbing rose located on the corner of the house. The area directly at the front of the house, called the Sanctuary, was the second area to be established. More formal garden beds edged this area with a feature weeping mulberry taking centre stage at the end of the garden. A much larger new lawn replaced a small patch of existing lawn.

The third area to be established was the corner area that borders both Fourth Rd & Second Rd. It was decided that this would be a less formal garden area, hence the name the Wild Wood. However, some structure was given to this garden area through the establishment of specific garden beds with gravel lined paths edging the beds.

As well as concentrating on the front garden, we decided to also work on the inner back garden which was fenced to be more manageable. Work commenced in this area in 2015. Beyond this area was left as natural bush and not tackled until 2020.

This area above the house, was to become the productive garden with major earthmoving and construction work undertaken during October and November 2020. Three levels were created providing a fabulous space to establish the productive garden. Elements such as the fire pit and surround seating and Glasshouse were added to this area.

Garden character

The garden has both formal and informal aspects with some of the plantings being clipped into hedges to give structure. Other areas are less structured with many of the salvias and Mediterranean plantings being left to

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naturalise across the garden. A combination of plantings, including succulents, have been made to give variety in texture, form and colour. The garden surrounding the front of the house is now well established after 10 years. The extensive Pandorea Vine, planted in 2017, now vigorously populates the two gum trees that support it and has allowed us to develop a lovely seating area under a wide arch of vine suspended by wire strung between the two gum trees.

Many plantings attract native birds and bees to the garden which provides a wonderful haven for these creatures. Honeyeaters, Eastern Spinebills, Pardalotes and Blues Wrens are some of the native birds which frequent the garden. Skinks are also found in the garden hiding in the many log refuges created specifically for wildlife. The many plantings also attract both European Bees and the Blue Banded Native Bees.

The Productive Garden

This was the last area of the garden to be developed. The plan was always for this area to be a productive garden given that we were fortunate to have created a large ornamental garden at the front of the house. Since January 2021 paving has been completed, and a chook house installed. The current chook house is in a new location as originally the chook house was in the area near the treehouse platform (unfinished project of an ambitious teenage son). Veggie beds and wicking beds have been created, a seating area and fit pit constructed, glasshouse constructed, raised veggie beds and fruit tree beds installed. Most recently a new growing area has been created where the chook house was originally, and there are plans to construct a vine arbour in the vacant space between the berry patches and new growing bed.

A fabulous Glasshouse (constructed by Bill), affectionately known as 'The She Shed' provides a perfect environment for seed raising, propagation and of course relaxing with a cup of tea on a cold winter's afternoon or a gin and tonic on a balmy summer evening. A cute timber garden shed, which is an original feature of the property (previously a cubby house) forms part of the productive garden and houses larger garden tools, equipment and fertilisers etc.

Lessons learned

If you can, have someone provide you with some good advice on garden structure and plantings suited to the area and create good soil. With the original soil being clay based, we moved in many tonnes of garden soil to ensure our plantings had a good start. We've continued to replenish the gardens beds with compost and mulch over the years. If you can, also lay a good irrigation system. Gum trees can be a challenge to garden with. However, given that they are a part of our environment we work with them rather than against them.

If we had our time again, we probably wouldn't have used white gravel for paths and larger areas in the productive garden. Even though when first laid it looked fabulous, over time the gum leaves have discoloured the gravel, and it is a bit of a task to rake up all the gum leaves off gravel.

Future plans

The plan is to relax and enjoy our wonderful garden oasis, however, Bill says that there will always be some new project or some changes to an existing feature that Annette wants to undertake, such as the new vine covered arbour.

A garden is a living organism that will always be changing and adapting, particularly as current weather patterns no longer conform to the usual distinct four-season cycle. Therefore, we will always be adapting and changing things, but not in a major way. We are looking forward to taking the time to enjoy our beautiful garden oasis and enjoy the wonderful produce that we harvest from it.

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.