



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

Open Gardens South Australia Welcomes you to **Pam's Garden**

Saturday 16th & Sunday 17th November, 2024

I bought the property at 3 Edgcombe Terrace in December 2019. At the time the front was one large kikuyu lawn with an oleander in one corner while the back was covered in bark chips after the removal of a forest of ivy and bamboo. All that was left was a palm, an iceberg rose and an orange tree ... both appearing to be on their last legs, some clivias, a large yellow flowering shrub, a huge yellow banksia rose and a simply enormous bay tree. Then there was the olive tree! The olive tree, once hidden behind bamboo, turned out to be a stunning shape and is my favourite thing in the garden.

After initially thinking that the rose and orange tree should go, I decided to cut them back, fertilise and water. They are now flourishing and it taught me not to be too hasty when making drastic decisions.

Taking on this garden meant a big learning curve. After gardening for nearly 30 years in Stirling (hydrangeas, camellias, tree ferns etc) I now had to tackle a garden in a different climate. It was hotter, drier and the soil could bake hard. Hence the move to Mediterranean plants – salvias, lavenders, succulents (masses) citrus, geraniums etc. There was no real plan although my first foray was in “guerrilla” gardening the front verge. Next, the front low brick wall was demolished to enable a bed to be sloped up to the footpath to give a slight change in level. The front was so flat.

Very early on I decided there would be no lawn. The garden has evolved over the five years, mainly on the premise that there was to be no bare soil; and it had to accommodate lots of fruit trees, herbs and any favourite plants that needed a home after being spotted in the nursery. Not surprisingly, it is rather over planted! Things were helped along by some surprises, such as the emerging from bark chips of cannas, plumbago, bottle brush, a wonderful white camellia, nasturtiums, a few bulbs and self sown echiums amongst others.

The pears and Murraya hedges went in very early but the Murraya has proved very slow for me. I expected it to screen the fence quite quickly but it is a long way off.

Early too were the raised beds for vegetables. As the garden has evolved they have too. An artichoke has taken over one of the beds. Last year this one plant produced 19 artichokes.

You will also find the following scattered in the front and back. 2 limes, 1 Valencia orange, 2 navel oranges, 2 Seville oranges, 1 blood orange, 2 mandarins, 3 lemons, 1 finger lime, 1 cumquat, 1 chinotto, 1 bergamot, 1 ruby grapefruit, 3 figs, 1 loquat, 1 pomegranate, 2 peach (white and yellow) 2 plums (Satsuma and Santa Rosa), 1 nectarine, 6 apples and 6 crab apples, a few strawberries, quince, red and white mulberries, passionfruit. Herbs and vegetables include silver beet, spring onions, aubergine, artichoke, dill, garlic, chives, basil (Italian and Thai), lemon grass, mint, oregano, thyme, parsley and chilli. Some of the fruit trees are in pots. Many are in the ground but most are still very young. Citrus make for great screening plants especially against neighbouring fences.

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Looking out onto greenery was tantamount to the “design”. A verandah, small deck and pergola were added more recently so we could be “in” the garden. The space under the olive tree is being developed as another shady outdoor space.

Unfortunately, the roses on the southern side of the main path had their finest moment in mid-October. This bed was a riot of entangled colours. Most surprisingly, they flourish despite competition from the huge variegated elm next door. This tree has twice dropped large limbs onto this bed but the plants bounced back quickly. The elm sends up suckers everywhere including in the front. Their range is astonishing.

The latest project is the planting a few weeks ago of grevilleas. Birds there are aplenty especially when the fruit is nearly ripe. I have learned to share. With the grevilleas I hope to attract smaller birds.

The garden is a source of great joy. My biggest problem is where to put a new “must have” plant. My daughter in law has given me a number of pots of dahlias. She is the “dahlia queen” having first grown a forest of gorgeous flowers in all shapes and colours last summer. Some she grew from tubers, others from seed. Now I need to have a go. Finding a suitable space is a challenge at this stage.

I should acknowledge the help I have had in the garden, in particular, from Paddy who put in the early paths and the garden lighting. Jo and Michael now help me as has Eugene with some more recent landscaping.

Any mistakes are entirely mine.