



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

Open Gardens South Australia Welcomes you to **Punkipot**

Saturday 29th & Sunday 30th November, 2025

Welcome to Lou & Ian's garden - an elongated 2,440 m². (0.6 acre)

Introduction I am an artist (painter) and occasional potter, and Ian is a musician who also enjoys making quirky clay garden art. A few of his creations and mine are found around the garden! We have planted mostly heat tolerant and drought tolerant plants, which hopefully will be able to deal with our changing climate. We currently have 3 Indian Runner ducks, 5 Barnevelder chooks, 2 veggie patches and a very small, covered orchard.

Garden Character We think that the garden has its own unique character. It is an eclectic mix of many different zones, each with its own style and function. It is a 'back-to-front' garden with most of the functional zones located in the front and many of the structures and hard landscaping are created from repurposed and recycled materials. The dense planting we have developed in the front creates a buffer zone from the busy traffic noise and gives us a significant degree of privacy.

Garden History We have been here for nearly 16 years, and initially there was very little in the front garden, and nothing in the back but a huge shed, an old Pepper tree and a Cootamundra Wattle. We had only a vague garden plan to start with, but the many different areas gradually developed, over time, as individual projects..... when money permitted, when a need arose, or new creative idea germinated! We have enriched the soil through regular additions of compost, mulch, animal manures and organic fertilisers and added 75,000 litres of rainwater storage. We installed irrigation with manual timers as we created each zone, watered really well in summer for the first couple of years, then cut down on the watering once the plants' root systems become established.

Recycled and Re-purposed Ian is a bit of a 'Renaissance man', an avid 'recycler & re-user', able to turn his hand to many different creative projects. He has used re-purposed materials throughout the garden and built the Chook House and Duck House from second hand corrugated iron and old doors and windows. In the front garden some fencing is old vineyard poles, a fox-proof Chook Run (attached to the 5 star Chook Palace!) has been created from 4 re-purposed tennis court gates (disguised with gum tree branches), and a chook fence made from the timbers of our old decking. The Duck Garden's raised veggie beds are old rainwater tanks, the picket fencing is recycled, the wicking beds close to the house are made from either recycled IBC's (lined with old pallet timber) or recycled rainwater tanks. Both the pretty blue Greenhouse/Glasshouse and the Potting Shed were made by Ian from old windows and doors and paved with old bricks. The Potting Shed has its own little hidden courtyard. Ian has also edged the driveway and garden beds with rocks we collected from local farms and built the drystone walls from local Wistow Quarry stone.

Permaculture We are both interested in some aspects of Permaculture and having a degree of self-sufficiency, and I think the garden reflects this. We have created different zones with different functions.

The chooks (Free ranging within limitations!) have their own 'veggie patch' inside their fox proof secure area, which is a large bed sown with a seed mix specifically for the chooks to graze. They have a little path behind their Palace so that through the day they can move freely between the shady area under the large Carob tree on the left side of their palace, to a second sunnier, fenced native 'chook garden' to the right of their Palace.

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The Duck Veggie Garden has a small pond for the ducks to swim. The raised veggie beds in this area are on a manual timer watering system. The Duck House has dual access to both the covered orchard and the Duck Veggie Garden so each morning we can select which area we want the ducks to be in.

In the **enclosed, irrigated orchard** we have planted both espaliered and standard fruit trees (peaches, apricots, plums, apples, pears, and a fig). Beneath the fruit trees in the orchard we have planted a cover crop which protects the soil, encourages worms, attracts pollinators and beneficial insects, increases the microbiology in the soil and slows water loss in summer.

The Wicking Beds are in a second veggie area closer to the house. Some are made using old IBC's and are lined with recycled pallet timber. Others are made from re-purposed rainwater tanks.

A Garden for Wildlife A strong component of the garden planting was to make it a space not just for us, but for nature and wildlife. We have planted to create habitat, shelter and nesting areas, food and water sources for a variety of creatures that now share the garden with us including birds, lizards, butterflies, honey bees, native bees, dragonflies and hoverflies. We have planted three areas specifically for wildlifea native garden near the entrance, a drought-tolerant Mediterranean planting closer to the house and a small flower meadow and pond in the back garden. Some small birds that live in our garden are Blue Wrens, Silvereyes, New Holland Honeyeaters, Eastern Spinebills, Red Wattlebirds and Weebills. Larger bird visitors (mainly to the front Garden) include ravens, magpies, sulphur crested cockatoos, galahs and Lorikeets. We also have a very healthy breeding population of Blue Tongue Lizards.

The Back Garden is a smaller, more traditional English influenced garden style with a focus on relaxation and outdoor living. It has higher water usage. It includes a courtyard, pruned hedges, roses and a mini 'flower meadow' filled with both annuals and perennials which provides beauty for us and nectar and pollen for the bees and butterflies. A pond creates an essential water source for the bees during summer heat. This area is also home to a quince tree, an ornamental Crabapple, Golden Elm, the old original Pepper tree and Cootamundra Wattle and several citrus. (oranges, grapefruit, lemon, lime).

A work in Progress The garden has changed and developed over time, as we have battled with gum tree roots, fallen trees, plant deaths, cut back on water usage, acquired ducks and chooks, altered plantings to cope better with extreme heat and drought and worked on future proofing for climate change. For example, this winter we lost a hedge of large pruned Eremophilas immediately in front of the house through disease and old age. We have used the opportunity to open up the space by replacing this with a low planting of drought tolerant flowering perennials and have scattered a quick growing annual flowering seed mix to cover the bare ground until the perennials mature. This garden is a work in progress, and will keep changing and developing because as every gardener knows, a garden is never truly finished!

Our garden gives us a small but reassuring degree of self-sufficiency and food security with eggs from our chickens and ducks, vegetables and fruit. It provides us with a sense of enclosure, privacy, escape, calm, as well as a creative outlet. It is a space where we can express our individuality and creativity, where we can pause and enjoy the product of all our hard work. Our own little bit of self-made paradise.

We hope that visitors to the garden will enjoy the variety, and perhaps take away some ideas and inspiration to use in their own gardens.