



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

# Open Gardens South Australia

## Welcomes you to

# PunkiPot

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> & Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2024

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Welcome to Lou & Ian's garden - an elongated 2,440 m<sup>2</sup>. (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 have 3 Indian Runner ducks, 7 heirloom breed chooks, 2 veggie patches and a very small, covered orchard.

**Garden Character** We think that the garden has its own unique character. Firstly, it is an eclectic mix of many different zones, each with its own style and function. Secondly, it is a 'back-to-front' garden with most of the functional zones located in the front. Thirdly, many of the structures and landscaping are created from repurposed and recycled materials. Finally, 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 13 years, and initially there was very little in the front garden, and absolutely 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, and 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 built all the small shed structures from recycled corrugated iron and old doors. He has used repurposed materials throughout the garden. In the front garden this includes fencing from old vineyard poles, a fox proof Chook Run (attached to the 5 star Chook Palace!) created from 4 repurposed tennis court gates disguised with gum tree branches, and a chook fence made from the timbers of our old decking. The raised veggie beds are old rainwater tanks, the picket fencing is recycled, the wicking beds are from either IBC's (lined with old pallet timber) or rainwater tanks. The pretty blue Greenhouse is all recycled materials, and the Potting Shed was created from old windows and doors with its own little hidden courtyard paved with old bricks. Ian has also edged the driveway and garden beds with rocks collected from local farms. The drystone walls are 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. We have separate areas for the ducks, another for the chooks, 2 separate veggie patches, a Greenhouse, a Potting Shed and small orchard.

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**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.

Web page: <http://opengardensa.org.au/>

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**The chooks** (Free ranging within limitations!) The chooks have their own 'veggie patch' inside their fox proof secure area, which is a large wicking bed sown with 'Clucker Tucker' a seed mix specifically for chooks to graze. During the day the chooks have a little path behind their Palace which enables them to move freely from 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 (which is a relatively newly established section of the native garden.)

**The Ducks, small Duck Pond and Veggie Garden** The Duck House has dual access to both the orchard and the veggie patch garden so each morning we can select which area we want the ducks to be in. The raised veggie beds in this area are on a manual timer watering system.

**The Orchard** In the enclosed, irrigated orchard we have planted both espaliered and standard fruit trees (2 peaches, 3 apricots, 5 plums, 3 apples, 2 pears, a fig and a Youngberry vine.) 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. We have included several flower species in the cover crop to further attract pollinators.

**The Wicking Beds** These are in a second veggie area closer to the house. Some are made using 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 was to make it a space not just for us, but for nature and wildlife. We have created habitat, shelter, nesting, food and water sources for a variety of creatures that now share the garden with us including birds, lizards, butterflies, honey bees, native bees and many insects. We have planted three areas specifically for wildlife .....a native garden near the entrance, a drought-tolerant Mediterranean planting closer to the house (including a couple of small bird baths) and a small flower meadow and pond in the back garden.

**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 multiple citrus varieties (several oranges, a grapefruit, a lemon, a lime, a blood orange and a couple of mandarins).

**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. The garden is a work in progress, and will keep developing because as everyone knows, a garden is never finished!

**Finally**, 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.

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.