



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

Open Gardens South Australia

Welcomes you to

The Mosaic Garden

Saturday 30th November & Sunday 1st December, 2024

A Brief History

At 1560m² the land size is large for the city but so are the buildings which reduces the amount of garden. The house was built in the 1930s and it had a single garage and a tennis court in the backyard. In the 1970s the sloping roof was added to the back of the house. The tennis court was converted into extensions to the garage and an indoor pool.

We moved in on 16th December 1998.

So... the property is a mixture of styles and ages – including the garden. I have a big problem with man-made ugliness, and there was plenty of it! Although a ‘gentleman’s bungalow’ the house had no heritage listing and was compromised so I decided to ‘decorate’!

In 1999 I attended a mosaic workshop – and I was hooked! So, whilst tackling the house, tidying the garden and raising the family, mosaics were a growing hobby.

There was no ‘grand design’ or planning. That vision requires a vision and a budget! The resulting garden and art today are the product of 25 years of problem solving, hard work and artistic inspiration. Welcome to my haven.

The Front Garden

You would think that a four-car garage would be more than enough for a family - but NO! The front yard became a car park for 20 years, but by 2018 the three boys had moved out along with their cars, vans and trailers and at last I could create a garden.

The lych gate was very unstable as its original hardwood uprights had rotted in the ground. It was moved aside and proper reinforced paths were created and brick feet added to raise the height of the shortened posts. It needed new side rails, a new gate, the ceiling lined and the roof re-pointed.

At the same time the brush fence was repaired and the tin ‘top hat’ replaced with a generous roll top.

The compacted topsoil was loosened with a digger and received a lot of mulch.

The cracked and patched concrete path was removed. Looking at the odd angles of the gate path, the driveway and the front steps, the only shape to marry them all up was a circle. I chose stones set in concrete to match the panels set in the veranda walls. Pavers also provide a contrast in colour and texture.

My garden man, Simon did the gate repairs and paving, and mixed me many loads of concrete and laid it out so I could set in the stones.

The garden is mostly native. The southern end is the flowering gum forest, and the edge around the paved area is lower growing shrubs to attract native birds. This part, planted in 2019 is now 4 years old. Fortunately, 3 cool summers allowed it to thrive and establish. It provides shade from the western sun, a noise barrier and a corridor for birds. The bush rocks were scattered around the

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/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/opengardensa>

original garden so we used them to form low rock edges. The colour scheme in the urn and pedestal reflect the colours of the native flowers.

Southern Path

In 2020 the neighbours developed their property. It took out my fence, the overgrown garden and a dilapidated workshop behind the pool building. The new metal fence is disguised with lilly pilly and Viburnum tinus. Behind the pool are 2 water tanks and a double compost bay.

Concrete was cut away for the fruit tree bed. The two low vegetable beds are built over concrete decorated with paving.

The Back Yard

Three new tuckeroos and four crepe myrtles were added last year. The old grapevine is struggling, and I lost four pencil pines. Thinking water-wise and understanding shade and root competition from street trees, has influenced me to plant what should survive. The yard is not exciting but it is tidy and the oven and BBQ pit mosaics are its highlights.

“You have a lot of pots” is a common remark! I do because I have large areas of concrete and they are the only way I can create the effect of a garden. I chose plants that thrive in pots and hand water them as a way of visiting them! The lawn is the only part of my garden that has a watering system.

The Mosaics

Over the twenty-five years, my style has progressed from basic techniques to a truly individual style as a result of problem solving.

1. Lack of coloured tiles led to glazing my own tiles, experimenting with crystal glazes and colour blending. My husband bought me a small kiln and it has been an exciting journey since!
2. Sore hands from the cutting led to making clay elements which are glazed and kiln-fired.
3. Big ugly walls needed huge mosaic panels which led to segments being made on mesh – flat on my table top. I work in my studio on the front veranda and from there these creations are treated like jigsaw pieces and stuck onto the walls.

As the mosaics are decorative and plentiful, I find the garden needs to be less fussy. So for example, succulents, agaves and cycads, which are all very architectural, compliment the fussiness of the art.

Teaching and Commissions

Over my 25 years of mosaicking, I've done both but sadly, no longer do so. My hands are worn out!

Thank You

Thank you for visiting and enjoying my garden and artworks. Open Gardens SA provides a great privilege to visit people's beautiful gardens. We are always blessed by such visits.

Thanks also to my friends on the gate, particularly Anna Polias doing four hours on Saturday and Sunday and being instrumental in facilitating my segment with Sophie Thomson on Gardening Australia.

See [Mosaic Master - Gardening Australia \(abc.net.au\)](http://abc.net.au/mosaic-master-gardening-australia)

Anne Martin

PS: Photography is very welcome!

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.