



Promoting the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening

Open Gardens South Australia Welcomes you to **Tickle Tank**

Saturday 12th & Sunday 13th October, 2024

THE TALE OF TICKLE TANK

I purchased the 50,000 gallon concrete tank on 450 square metres of land in 1998. It was the old town water storage tank built in 1944. I decided to make it my home. First of all I had a swim in it and then I syphoned all the water out. After that I daydreamed a while. Then I planned how to make it happen!

Stage 1 was to excavate and remove 20 truckloads of earth as 3 metres of the 4 metre deep concrete tank was buried below ground level.

In Stage 2 a concrete cutting contractor cut the holes for the doors and windows. Cranes lowered into position 3 smaller tanks which were to become bathroom, laundry and extra rooms. The skeletal structure of my home was created, and the fleshing out has been an ongoing process ever since: the mezzanine play loft, stained glass porthole windows, up the stairs to the bedroom and balcony deck.

Stage 3 involved an urgent landscape rescue mission to build retaining walls to hold back earth ravaged during the site excavation. I used material salvaged from the site; sandstone blocks, broken brick, stones, tiles and rustic timbers from old fence posts. The steep slope and wet weather made this a challenging and desperate time to beat the threatening winter.

Stage 4,5,6 etc, etc,

From there the garden has evolved; retaining walls became garden seats and a Dragon, creek beds flowed from excess water run-off, little bridges were made from recycled timber, a mermaid sculpture grew out of a stone wall, broken tiles formed a mosaic in the rose arbour. Seeds were sown, flowers grow; bulbs seek the warmth to complete their dance of spring; trees sprout leafy strong; hardy natives thrive. And so the garden has grown.

The garden today is a low maintenance, organic, water wise, seasonal garden. The multi-levels with stone and rendered retaining walls maintain moisture and keep plants cool during summer. Hardy native grasses, herbs and succulents thrive, a riot of colour from early spring through summer. Purple native mint bush *prostanthera rotundifolia*, crab apples, roses and blossoms from fruit trees add further delight to a spring palette. Purple blooms of *hardenburgia* and red flowering acacia 'Scarlet Glory' add colour and texture to the Adelaide Hills winter. The garden has colour and interest all year with mosaics and sculptures.

MY PHILOSOPHY

My philosophy is that the garden is an integral part of the house, to be viewed from any part inside the house and also an extension of the house. The garden is open-air rooms for relaxation, meditation, adventure for the children, eating or just being and enjoying life.

I believe that in the problem can be found the solution, as there were many challenging problems that offered opportunities for creative problem solving. I use salvaged and recycled materials throughout the garden and my love and experience of sculpture and creating art is constantly in play.

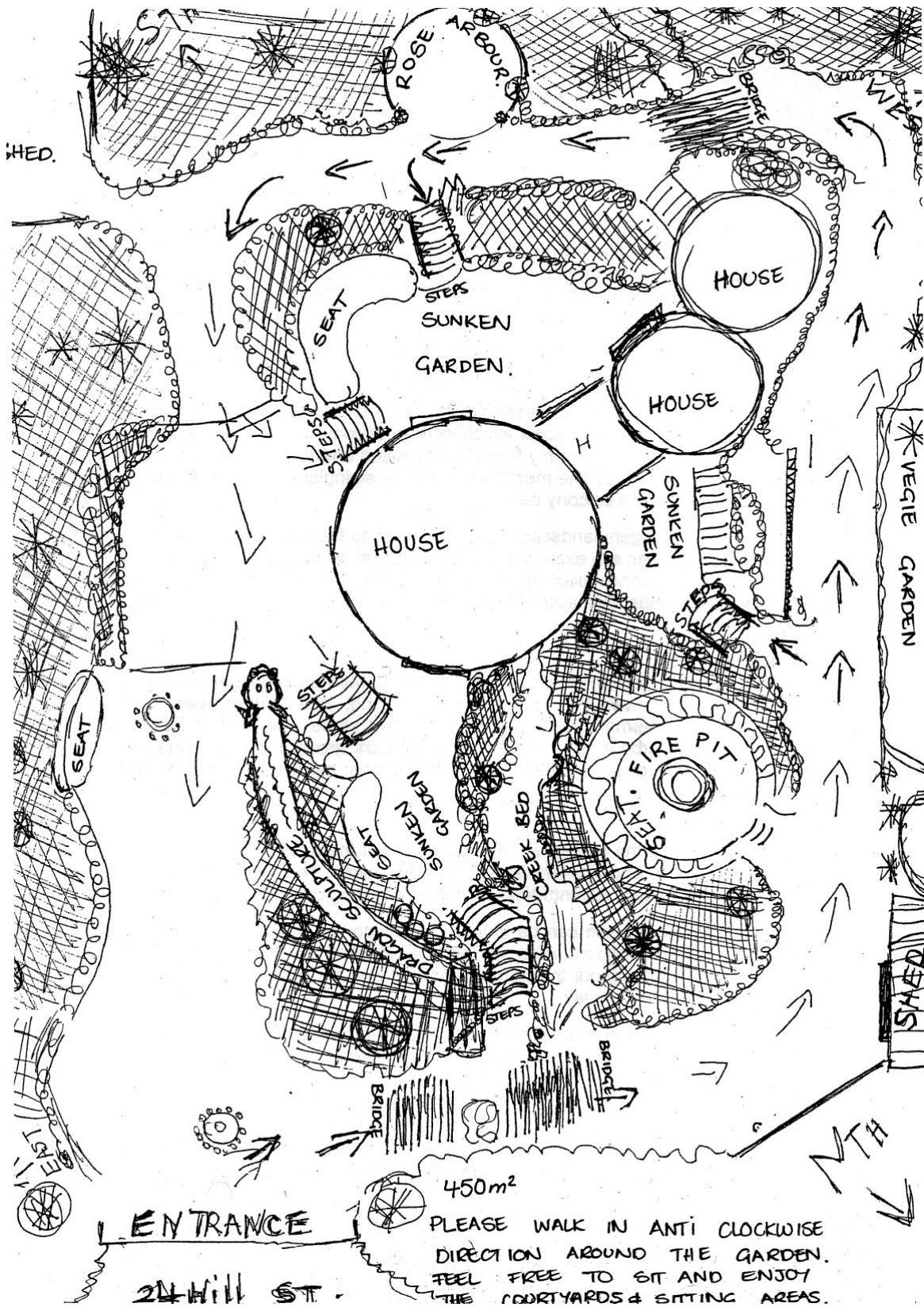
This property is 26 years in the making and continues to evolve. I designed, landscaped and did the physical work on this garden myself on a very low budget. This year marks my 20th opening to the public.

Irene Stone Pearce.

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 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.