

GARDEN NOTES

Illalangi Farm (House on the Hill)

This property was purchased by the current owners in 2013. Before creating the garden you see today, the owners lived in the Cottage house located on the North West corner of the property. Here is where their love of gardening began along with their steep learning curve in understanding what could grow in the extreme weather conditions the area can experience. It was trial and error planting for a few years. As time progressed the decision was made to build a new home and garden on the site you are visiting today. This new garden was developed in 2018, prior to this, the garden & home area was grazing land for cattle and sheep. As you walk around you will see the fence that divides the farmland from the garden space.

The vision for the garden was to create a flowing idyll that frames the spectacular borrowed landscape which includes the You Yangs in the far distance and to nestle the house into the hill. As access to town water is not available, the garden also needed to be drought tolerant.

Scott Leung from *Eckersley Garden Architecture* and Architect Sean Godsell worked together to design a garden that was in harmony with the land and house. Stuart Robinson and his team built the paths and stairs from stone sourced from the site. Importantly, the design needed to protect both the house and garden from the south-west winds and connect the inside of the house to the outside.

You will notice the shelter belt of 1500 native trees that sweeps around the east and west of the site. This was planted by the current owners in 2017 using native tube stock. It is amazing to see the growth of these trees in just five years. The birdlife that this area attracts has also been one of the great joys of gardening for the owners and the wind break has helped immensely to establish the rest of the garden by sheltering young plants.

Areas of Interest

You will notice the large area of lawn on the northern side of the garden. Kikuyu grass has been an easy-care choice coping well in dry weather. The only watering system on the property was installed here, but is rarely used. This location provides a spectacular view across to the Ceres township on the East and You Yangs directly north.

On the south side you will notice a very unusual feature of the garden. That is a Sean Godsell designed 30-metre x 30-metre shelter which hovers above the house and part of the garden on the north and south side. Louvres on the roof can be opened and closed to work with the seasons. On hot summer days the area provides shade and a wonderful place to enjoy the dappled sunshine. On cooler days during winter, it opens to allow direct sunlight into the area.

This area has also been home to many nesting Willie Wagtails as they return to the same nest for subsequent broods in the same year. If you look at the cross bars on the roof you can spot four nests being used today.

This area is a beautiful sanctuary and with the seasons, it is forever changing. The plants here survive on dappled sunlight, these include native noon flower (*Disphyma crassifolium*), Spiny-head mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*), creeping Myoporum (*Myoporum parvifolium*) and Sea lavender (*Limonium perezii*).

Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), which is growing under the shelter, is a spectacular site come Autumn.



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As you walk on the western side of the garden, you will notice the *Kunzea ericoides* commonly known as Kanuka, white tea tree in full bloom. This produces a stunning show of flowers during the months of October and November.

Southeast of the garden you will find a repurposed tank which was found on the property, this has been cut down the middle and is now 2 vegetable garden beds. This is a recently completed project as the vegetable garden was previously located at the cottage garden.

Planting Scheme

As you walk around you will notice the repetitive planting scheme within the garden.

Plants such as White correa (*Correa alba*), common Boobialla (*Myoporum insulare*), Lomandra (*Lomandra confertifolia* 'Seascape' and *Lomandra longifolia* 'Tanika'), Seaberry Saltbush (*Rhagodia candolleana*), pride of Madeira (*Echium fastuosum* 'Duxfield Blue'), Agave (*Attenuata*) which have been transplanted from the adjacent cottage garden and *Pimelea ferruginea* 'Pink Solitaire'. The Pink Solitaire provides a special pop of pink colour in late Spring. You will see clusters of these on the western and eastern side of the garden.

Over time the owners have introduced Sea lavender (*Limonium perezii*). These plants thrive in tough conditions. The flush of purple colour all year round makes this plant a standout in a dry garden. Another colourful plant is Dogbane (*Plectratanthus Neochilus*), which is not a native plant but a perennial herb from the mint family. The owners have enjoyed this plant selection not only because they are easy to grow and require little attention, but they are also a plant that rabbits don't like.

In the last few years the owners have introduced Salvia's which again relish the tough conditions and provide lots of colour throughout the year.

General Information:

Soil Type: Moderately fertile sandy loam soil on tertiary alluvial (sandstone) deposits

Garden Size: 2.5 acres

Water Source: Tank and Dam

Garden Age: Construction started in June 2018, planting finished in 2019

Gravel Topping: Crushed Granite, You Yangs

Plants From: Oz Trees Colac, Barrabool Landcare, Geelong Community Nursery, Wombat Gully, neighbours, owners propagation system

Mulch: Ecodynamics Mulch

Birdlife: Superb Fairywrens, Willie Wagtails, New Holland Honeyeaters, Blue-winged Parrots, Eastern Rosellas, Flame Robins, Crimson Rosellas, Black Cockatoos and Wattle birds

Rainfall average: 550-600 millimeters

Water features: Wren bird bath on the eastern side is from Willie Wildlife Sculptures, made in Ocean Grove. The circular bird baths are inherited from the owners family. Feature garden seat by Dale Cowan

Solar: A solar system powers the property and is located at the Cottage house.

Thank you for visiting Illalangi Farm. Instagram: @hillhousebarrabool

Illalangi Farm is located on the lands of the Wadawurrung people. Open Gardens Victoria wish to acknowledge the Traditional custodians and we pay respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

These notes can be downloaded from the Open Gardens Victoria website:

www.opengardensvictoria.org.au