

RHONDA'S GARDEN

My garden in Park Street, Trentham is now three years old. It was created around my new sustainable house to complement its clean lines and provide a relaxing, beautiful outdoor space. The house was situated on the south side of the block so that the main windows and deck faced to the north and receive the sun's warmth in winter. The garden is full of light for most of the year. Shade trees have been planted to protect the west facing windows.

My brief to Tim Pilgrim the local gardener/landscape designer who created this lovely garden, was to provide a small lawn for my grandchildren to play as well as a small vegetable garden. Tim has applied an artist's eye to create a garden full of colour and movement. The plan was informal and naturalistic. A cottage garden inspired by the loose beauty of meadows and prairies. I wanted a garden that would attract the pollinators and be friendly to our local wildlife and be sustainable.

With great soil and a wet, cool climate similar to the UK's, Trentham has plenty of beautiful cottage gardens growing in its midst. This garden was created to soften the newness of my home on its town size block. I wanted a cottage garden aesthetic and liked the style of Dutch garden designer Piet Oudolf. His style of perennial mass plantings in a naturalistic style and plants in drifts rather than blocks appealed to Tim as well. He drew on those ideas when he selected the plants appropriate for our rather cold, wet winters and now hot, dry summers. Tim approached the design of the garden like a painting, carefully choosing colours that would combine well in the winter gloom and bright summer light. We used warmer oranges and reds from the landscape to help blur the boundaries.

The central path wanders through the garden and is softened by the plantings. Tim created mounds in the beds so that you feel surrounded by plants when you walk down the paths. The garden is like a naturalistic meadow.

I wanted an antique bath I had incorporated into the garden design. It is now the central feature in the back garden under an arch. It is plumbed with hot water so that I can have a bath outside when the weather is suitable. There is also a small vegetable plot where I mainly grow herbs. I also have a compost area and the garden supports three worm farms.

During Spring, the mauves, blues, whites and pinks of the garden are all singing and dancing. As these plants fade, the second layer of planting takes over, giving more height and structure to the borders. Evergreen shrubs provide interest all year and the topiary trees and bushes create structure in the cold months when there is not much going on in the garden.

Rhonda's Garden is located on the lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung 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**