

JENNY'S GARDEN

My mum Glenyce, who died in 2013, and I have been gardening here since 1966. The garden had been quite neglected until our arrival, but its bones were there and, with its dilapidated chook shed, crowded fruit trees, Hill's Hoist and narrow concrete paths, it gave us an invaluable glimpse into the lives of the people who went before us. These days the garden, on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, can be divided into several sections:

Front Herbaceous and Mixed Borders

The main bed is dominated by, well I was going to say weeds, a very large *Strelitzia reginae* (Bird of Paradise) that came with the house and *Lepechinia salviae* (Chilean Pitcher Sage). Other herbaceous perennials in this bed include the lovely grass, *Calamagrostis Karl Foerster*, many members of the daisy family, including achilleas, asters, dahlias and heleniums, plus *Salvia uliginosa* (Bog Sage), *Agapanthus Black Pantha*, *Kniphofia Percy's Pride*, *Eucomis comosa* (Pineapple Lily) and *Sedum Autumn Joy*. The tall purple thing is *Verbena bonariensis*.

Under the bedroom window, plantings include more dahlias, *Crococsmia* sp. (probably *paniculata*) that also came with the house, *Euphorbia characais* subsp. *wulfenii*, self-sown hollyhocks and *Nepeta Dropmore* (Cat Mint). The grass here is a cultivar of *Panicum virgatum*.

The porch bed includes *Cotinus coggygria* Grace, *Melianthus major*, the stunning *Geranium Rozanne*, and around the corner, *Buddleja Black Knight*. The dark pink *Amaryllis belladonna* from Grace Eckersley's garden in Surrey Hills may well be in flower (fingers crossed) at the front step.

Glenyce's Shrub Border

This is the oldest part of the garden and stretches all the way along the west side of the reclaimed concrete crazy path to the back garden. Starting with *Spiraea cantoniensis* at the front gate, the garden includes an old *Rhus* sp. (possibly *chinensis*), *Abelia x grandiflora*, *Lochroma cyanea*, *Ruscus hypoglossum*, *Camellia japonica*, *C. sasanqua*, *Rhododendron Kurume* hybrid, *Laurus nobilis* in a blue pot, *Viburnum opulus Sterile*, *Kolkwitzia amabilis*, *Plectranthus ecklonii* and *Chimananthus praecox* at the end. This border is home to possums who keep the camellias from flowering. Gosh I hate them!

Weedy Woodland aka Lagerstroemia Walk

The crepe myrtles are all hybrids (*L. indica* x *L.fauriei*) in the Indian Summer series. The cultivars are *Natchez* (x2), *Sioux* (x3) and *Toscarora* (x1). The under-plantings include *Daphne odora*, *Helleborus argutifolius* and *H. x hybrida*, *Cyclamen coum* and *C. hederifolium* and many spring-flowering bulbs, violets and other opportunists.

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And there's Mum's old rose that, for donkey's years, we thought was Rosa Cecile Brunner. It's not. It is actually Rosa Bloomfield Abundance, a very close relative.

Hydrangea Border

Mum always wanted a border of hydrangeas and started with one plant, a cutting from her parents' place. This now almost 60 years old plant, still flourishes. We planted a few more during her lifetime and they've mostly done well especially since the 10-year drought ended. Other shrubs are *Viburnum plicatum* and *V. opulus* var. *opulus* that help to shield the hydrangeas from the hot morning sun. *H. paniculata* Pee Gee has done reasonably well but the oak-leaved hydies (*H. quercifolia*) out-shine all the others IMHO.

The drier section of the border is towards the back gate where there is an old *Chaenomeles speciosa* (Japonica or Flowering Quince) also from my grandparents' place and a *Philadelphus* cv. There are some gorgeous salvias, notably *S. dysjuncta* and *S. semiatrata*, serving as infill. The young tree down there is *Pistacia chinensis*. Note to self: this area needs to be irrigated more frequently.

Mini Orchard

It speaks for itself, really. There are three apples (Granny Smith, Pink Lady and Wild Granny), a very old pear, a quince (*Cydonia oblonga* Smyrna) and a nectarine that's doing it tough due to competition with Kikuyu. The lemon tree at the west end of the Girl Cave is *Citrus limon* Eureka. Main issues? Marauding possums, fruit bats, rainbow lorikeets, corellas and codling moth. Sigh.

Vegetable Garden / Potager / Picking Garden

The perennial/permanent plantings here are the rhubarb, the culinary herbs and the asparagus. Everything else comes and goes on a seasonal basis. I hope there'll be something here for you to see. It's my favourite part of the garden and it supplements my culinary needs brilliantly.

Back Fence Berries

Hmm. Let's blame competition for water and nutrients on tree roots (ailing *Banksia integrifolia* that supports possums at night) and *Eucalyptus maidenii* (that beautiful tree over the back fence in the borrowed landscape). That being said, I'm keeping on keeping on. The variety that's done best is *Rubus idaeus* Pink Neika. She's tasty too and well worth the effort.

Back Patio

The vine is *Vitis coignetiae* in case you're wondering. It's done its temperature-control and shading jobs superbly and the possums don't like it, so that gives it a trillion bonus points.

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East Side “Whatever Will Grow” Border

What you see is what you get here. *Nandina domestica*, a very under-estimated screening /shrub mass plant has done well towards the front section of this “anything goes” border. There are lots of clivias (mostly *Clivia nobilis* and *C. miniata*) plus cannas, ginger lilies, liriopes, more *Ruscus hypoglossum*, some precious *Polygonatum* sp. (possibly *P. hirtum*) and *Trachelospermum jasminoides*. A self-sown *Parthenocissus quinquefolia* has gone nuts over the gate and needs urgent management (I’ll attend to it before you come). Jack-in-the-Pulpit (*Arisarum vulgare*) might be here too but he comes and goes a lot so you can never be sure that you’ll meet up with him.

So that’s it, pretty much. I just want to say that gardening is very much a shared thing and many of the plants you see here today have been given, purloined, purchased, bird-dropped or otherwise obtained from off-site sources. We will have a few things here for sale but not many.

Many thanks to my dear friend Alex (Rancescapes) for keeping me and “Jenny’s Garden” going and to Ian, who does the “lawns and edges” every fortnight and to you all for coming.

Jenny's Garden is located on the lands of the Wurundjeri people. Open Gardens Victoria wishes to acknowledge the Traditional custodians of this land 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

