

## GARDEN NOTES

### YARRABEE

*Yarrabee* is a five-acre property purchased in 1982. Originally the property was part of the Goulburn Park horse farm. In the late 1970s the farm was subdivided into 33 x five-acre lots. The land at the time was flat and flood prone. Because of this, it took over two years to bring in thousands of tonnes of clean fill to build up the property. First on the agenda was building a dam which holds a million litres when full. Then, over 2,000 sugar gum seedlings were planted as a border for the property.

With help from his father and brothers, Steve brought in the thousands of boulders and rocks from around Lara to create the three ponds, a waterfall and some garden beds. In 1989 the house was built and later a barbeque building. At the back of the house is a beautiful four-metre rock waterfall with three bottle trees and a covering of two types of Baby Sunrose *Cordifolia* and colourful running geraniums.

Upon entering the garden, you will find a roundabout with newly planted tree aloes. You can take a journey down the right side of the driveway past numerous 'Aloes Aloes' succulents and salvias which provide year-round colour. In the front under the gums we have built up garden beds and planted plectranthus, pelargoniums and placed hydrangeas in colourful metal pipes.

A pond is the feature in front of the house, along with two beautiful ironbark trees surrounded by Princess Lilies. The path to the house has a garden bed which resembles a lava bed of rocks from which a variety of coloured daylilies break up the contours. Australian cycads are also prominent. Continuing down this path you come to two other ponds, one of which is partially covered with a groundcover acacia and bird of paradise, and the other is surrounded by yellow pig face.

Over the years we cut down the sugar gums and replaced them with over 600 river she-oak trees. These trees provide a great windbreak around the property and make a lovely looking forest. Walking paths and a bridge have been built so you can wander around the dam, sit and view the dam and the bromeliads planted beneath the she-oaks, or walk through the mass planting of 300 bottlebrushes which give a spectacular display in late spring.

In December 2009 we decided to stop the birds eating all our fruit and covered the orchard with 25m x 40m of bird netting. The orchard now has over 38 fruit trees, featuring plums, apples, quinces, figs, apricots, guava and pear trees. Also housed under the netting are loganberry, blackberry and raspberry plants alongside two beds which hold more than 180 strawberries plants.

In 2010 we started the front garden. First, we removed all the sugar gums and created a network of walking tracks to guide visitors through a diverse range of exotic and native garden beds. We then planted a wide range of drought tolerant trees and plants. You will find scattered throughout the garden trees such as crepe myrtles, grevilleas, ginkgos, flowering gums, Lipstick maples, flowering ash and a Persian Silk Tree. Our garden beds are filled with some rare South African plants as well as eremophilas, geraniums, buddleias, agastache, salvias, various succulents and many more.



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The side garden has two *Brachychiton* 'Jerilderie Red' placed in a sweeping lawn. Alongside the lawn we have garden beds with mass plantings of day lilies and pelargoniums. The beds also hold crepe myrtles, and 'Aussie Pink' Australian Native Hibiscus trees.

In 2012 we built 10 veggie beds, made from wood and recycled corrugated iron. These beds provide an abundance of veggies throughout the year. Later in the same year we put up a glass house and now we sell the many plants propagated from the garden in our small nursery.

It has taken many, many years to get the garden where it is now, and we have found that it is ever changing scenery. Just like everyone else we have redesigned or garden beds or replaced many of our plants – many due to frosts, floods or they just did not like the spot they were put in. From bare ground we have developed a beautiful garden all spaced out over the five acres that is now an enchanting place to visit and explore. There are many surprises as one walks around *Yarrabee* and the gardens are designed to give visitors an indication of how various plants perform and grow.