

DAPHNE'S GARDEN

Daphne's garden is a rambling farm garden with the Warrion Hills in the background. The area has very fertile volcanic soil and in the past was a renowned onion growing district. There is also underground water that is used for irrigation of the current potato crops.

The Finn family first settled on this property in approximately 1915 after experiencing the harshness of the Otways. There was only a small garden at the front of the house allocated for fruit trees and some annuals as the soil was far too valuable for farming. All that remains of the original garden is a spectacular Salmon gum, double pink flowering Hawthorn and a wonderful lemon tree.

Daphne started laying out the garden in the late 1970s as her family was growing up and work commenced more seriously in 1983. It is all her work and she realises that she has made many mistakes, gradually extending the garden and moving fences as recently as a few years ago. Her love of trees, roses and English style gardens was the beginning of a love of all plants, especially rare and unusual, a fascination for a number of varieties in all species which has led to her creating borders and vistas.

After giving up full-time work ten years ago, Daphne has developed the garden into semi-formal rooms, as hedges of hornbeam and others have grown. Today the house is bordered on all sides. To the very west is the dry garden consisting of a Cypress hedge that was attacked by the canker virus which wiped out the centre of the hedge. This allowed an opportunity to plant some unusual trees such as Korean silver fir, Abies Koreana, Korean pine, prostrate redwood Sequoia, and further along are Olive trees, Gynea lily and others.

At the other end of the garden near the old dairy is Viburnum macrocephalum. A central planting of Cannas, Cussonia tree, some Aloes and others, a hedge of Pomegranate and ornamental pears Chanticleer are a feature. There is also a colonnade bordered by Mondo grass and Box hedging. Camellias, native Frangipani, old world Roses and Dogwood abound. Along a walkway are arbours of Rose Cornelia and Clair Martin, Clematis and another of Wisteria underplanted with Rhododendrons. There are also ferns, a Rice-paper tree, a large Witch-hazel and Copper Beech. A collection of Japanese Maples underplanted with treasures such as Fritillaries, Erythronium and others under a crazy Willow are stunning but the feature of this bed is the Cornish controversa Variegata. Another bed features a variegated Agonis dolsofia magnolia, magnolia "The fairy pink" white horse Chestnut and old fashioned roses.

The back garden has a pergola with espaliered apples, pears and a plum, Wisteria and hops. This leads to a sunken garden bordered by Bonica roses. There is a small arbour with Laburnum trees underplanted with yellow roses and this area also has a pond and many large trees now creating a micro climate and this is the best place to be on a warm day!

To the east and where visitors will arrive, the gateway is bordered by globe Prunus plum, Siberian Iris and a Sorbus tree. There is a border of many perennials which is sheltered from the south by a Ligustrum Privet hedge and a collection of Conifers. The Maples featured here are from the lipstick range. This part of the garden is approximately five years old and Daphne is astounded by the growth which is a testament to the wonderful soil. This garden continues to grow and develop.

GARDEN NOTES

When you go through the archway you enter a series of rooms that are perhaps more semi formal and there are plantings of Smoke bush, Salvias, Berberis, Clematis, Dianthus and many more. When you head north there is a reflection pond, an avenue of Crab Apples, Gorgeous and Malus ioensis. To your right is a variety of trees from variegated Beech, swamp Cyprus, a row of Ginko, Oak and others. Peonies, weeping Cherries and Tulip trees are a delight.

Daphne is very grateful for the help over the later years of her very patient husband, Greg, in moving those fences (now electric for easier moving) and for carting and carrying all that is cut back, as well as mowing all the grass.

Daphne is also very grateful to a number of gardening friends who have been very generous with plants, cuttings and advice over the years. The garden has been the complete work of Daphne who is the first to admit she has no formal gardening training so it is all trial and error. Creating fun places for grandchildren to discover and peaceful areas to relax and enjoy the fruits of her labour have been her goal. There are also areas of the garden that are dedicated to many, very happy memories of loved ones.

Daphne would say the garden has been created from love so hopefully others will enjoy the garden as a peaceful, happy place. A neighbour nominated the garden in 2016 for the Otway Garden of the Year and Daphne was thrilled to be awarded Judges Garden of the Year award.

The View Club will be offering Devonshire Tea over the weekend as a fundraiser for The Smith Family which sponsors and educates children.

There will also be plants, garden obelisk and supports on sale. Plenty of off-road parking and toilets are available.

Other places to visit in the area include:

- the local nursery
- Red Rock Lookout is a popular tourist destination
- Cororooke township with winery, general store and vintage clothing store
- Colac township is only 15 minutes away.

Daphne's Garden is located on the lands of the Eastern Mar people. Open Gardens Victoria wish 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**

