

GARDEN NOTES

YAMBA

We arrived at Yamba in February 2005 to a house and garden surrounded by 350 cypress trees - with not a view to be seen. The trees were six rows deep! On top of that, the soil was clay and rock. A post-hole digger was used to dig the first 500 holes. I left a garden in Cavendish with beautiful black sand where plant loss was minimal - to replacing plants 2-3 times, because of wet feet. Apart from six existing trees I've had to start from scratch. Drainage, raised beds and improving soil have certainly helped the plants and garden to survive and thrive. I still lose the odd tree or part of a hedge - I am learning to accept that.

My previous garden was filled with hundreds of roses and perennials. Now, apart from a rugosa hedge, the garden consists of a variety of perennials, grasses, peonies, trees, hedges and bulbs.

I love collecting the rare and unusual - fitting in with my hobby of arranging flowers. Instead of only flowers, I like to incorporate stems, grass, berries and foliage - hence my interest in all of the above, there is something to pick all year round.

Flowers include dahlias, delphinium, peony, chrysanthemum which feature prominently, plus the fabulous array of salvias; heleniums, helianthus and Rudbeckia.

I prefer bulbs on mass - bluebells under 40 narrow oak, followed by allium sphaerocephalon. The daffodils are in long beds with pencil pine at regular intervals - I'm also planting down the drive between the Chinese elm.

The vegetable garden is another delight. I have a tall medlar hedge separating the vegie garden from my perennial borders. There is also a pomegranate hedge.

Hedges are a necessity in this garden because of the severe winds - hence the massive cypress hedge we were greeted with. I keep my hedges to around one meter high, using mainly escallonia ivelyi and ligustrum vulgare. For variety some hedges are trimmed into a wavy design, creating more interest.

Grasses have really come to the fore. I have used; calamagrostis X acutiflora 'Karl Foerster' in a bed with about 30 capped pencil pine. I am trialling stipa gigantea along the internal driveway. I find oak, maple and conifer cope well in the clay soil. Succulents are another popular plant in pots, hedges and along edges.

I hope you can come and enjoy a day in a country garden. My proceeds will be going to the Hamilton Ages Care Trust.

Yamba is located on the lands of the Eastern Maar people. Open Gardens Victoria wishes 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**