

THE AUSSIE VEGGIE PATCH

Welcome to our garden.

We moved into our property 14 years ago, at which stage it was completely overrun with ivy that had strangled and smothered many of the existing plants and trees in the garden. It was a slow process over a couple of years to clean up the garden. As an area was cleaned up, it was replaced with an ornamental garden in its place as well as a small 1m x 2m veggie patch that was located as soon as you come through the front gate on the right. As time has passed and with a shift in focus to a more productive garden, this little veggie patch has slowly expanded and now almost all garden spaces contain edibles of some sort.

Starting outside the front gate we have created a small herb garden for the neighbourhood to share in, consisting of some of the more common herbs that people will use with their dinners.

The hedging along the front fence and along the drive was from the initial redo of the front garden as we went for a more formal entrance. This has been kept, although some was relocated to help maintain formality and to edge the garden from the drive.

On the right of the drive the tall trees are ornamental pears creating a green wall for the majority of the year that helps to create privacy and block out the headlights of cars as they come around the bend in the night. The garden underneath, having started as our first veggie patch of annuals, has now transitioned to predominantly perennial edibles including rhubarb, summer raspberries and apples. The apples were an experiment in espalier growing to maximise space and are underplanted with pineapple sage and alyssum, the alyssum being a great companion plant for apples to help deter the codling moth.

On the left of the drive behind the hedging are tree peonies with the initial plant handed down from my grandfather. Over time it has been divided to fill in the driveway space. Iceberg roses have been included to continue the flowers as the peonies finish theirs.

Walking into the front garden, under the arbour covered in grapevines, you will find our mini orchard. The front yard was stripped out and replaced with the mini orchard over winter in 2020. When creating this space we took into consideration trailer parking access and access to the majority of garden beds from the pathways to avoid needing to walk on the beds. The paths were kept grassed to allow for barefoot walking through the garden. We also wanted a space for the chickens to roam, and with the big gum tree next door blocking sunlight and sucking up moisture in the front corner, this made for a great place to set up their house and smaller yard. The mini orchard consists of apples, plums, oranges, mandarins, cherries, a peacharine, mulberry, fig, apricot and plumcot as the main trees. We are in the ongoing process of underplanting these as we find the right plants.

GARDEN NOTES

As you come around the left side of the house a small gate separates the backyard keeping the dog play space and chicken space separate. On the left is our greenhouse, to help start off seedlings, and the potting bench area. Following the fence line we have a Lilly Pilly hedge for a screen with a number of citrus and perennial edibles in front.

As we move up the garden we have some raised veggie beds. These have been utilised as the ground underneath is very gravelly and wasn't suitable to plant in directly. We have kept the space after the raised beds open for entertaining and a space for the kids to play, including the playground area to the left side. On the right against the house wall is a further mix of herbs giving quick access from the kitchen.

At the back of the garden is where most of the annual veggies are grown. This space is well protected from the wind and at the same time gets lots of sun which many veggies prefer. The veggies are grown directly into the ground in this space, as I find the ground much more forgiving to the plants with the weather extremes and keeping plants hydrated when I may have been a little slack with the watering. I use straw for the paths in this space as I like to regularly reconfigure the growing space as new ideas and crops pop into my mind, and when doing so, the straw can be dug into the soil to help build it up. The solid garden edge around the border helps to control the weeds, keeping them from taking over in the veggie patch. This space is also home to our bees who do an amazing job helping with pollination and keeping us in supply of honey. The queen bee is named Dino and all the other bees are named Nuggie by the kids after one of their favourite foods, dinonuggets.

The large black box in the corner of the veggie patch is my home office for the "working from home" days. A basic bench setup inside creates the perfect place to set up for a day and to keep an eye on the garden and watch it grow.

The garden continues to evolve over time and I am sure it will always be a work in progress as we continue to add more diversity to the garden to support our chemical free growing approach, try new varieties of plants and test out new ways to get the most out of our space.

Thank you for taking the time to come visit and share our space with us.

The Aussie Veggie Patch 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

