

BANOOL GARDEN

Banool was built circa 1936 by the family of the late Hugh Mahon, who served in Australia's first Commonwealth Parliament from 1901-1920. He was famously the only Federal Parliamentarian to be expelled from Parliament. We bought the 1.6 acre property in late 2004 and have meticulously set about restoring the garden and home to its former glory. The little cottage in the garden was previously used as a tool and machinery store but now is renovated as a guesthouse. A new garage and outdoor entertainment area was built, using the original "tool shed" as inspiration for the design. A rear and side terrace was added to help compliment the home's design linked by the new pool and spa area.

Much of the stonework, including the small stone pillars throughout the garden, entrance pillars, driveway and garden edging are original features. In 2005 an arborist charted, assessed and approximated the age of each of the magnificent trees on the property, prior to the renovation taking place. The bird life these trees attract is wonderful and we are so fortunate to have kookaburras, parrots, rosellas, black cockatoos, owls and finches visiting in abundance. Many of the trees were planted before the current home was built and are believed to be 100+ years old. This includes the hedges across the front and driveway sides of the property.

Paul Bangay was magnificent in working with the architect and owners in linking the amazing tree canopies with the home and creating an entire understory for a very dilapidated old garden being strangled by privet, cotoneaster, ivy and sweet pittosporum.

The property is bordered at the front and down the driveway side by Himalayan Cypress hedges *Cupressus torulosa*. A Port Jackson Fig *Ficus rubiginosa*, stands to the left hand side of the entrance, believed to have been planted in the 1960s, and is underplanted with clivia. In 2016 we lost a gorgeous gnarled Sweet Chestnut *Castanea sativa*, which stood halfway up the driveway to the left. It was from the original 1930s planting and has left quite a hole to fill. New additions are the three Acer 'October Glory' that add fantastic autumn colour and interest. The round lawn area at the top of the driveway houses three significant trees: Himalayan Cedar *Cedrus deodara*, Pin Oak *Quercus palustris* and Atlas Cedar *Cedrus atlantica*. Underplanting these proved quite a challenge in the drought!

This round lawn garden also has a magnificent wisteria we managed to retain and is underplanted with beautiful purple flag iris. The rectangular oak lawn at front also has a number of significant trees. A Red Oak *Quercus robur* is at the bottom of the lawn area alongside a Liquidambar styraciflua. A beautiful specimen of Himalayan Cedar is along the pathway back to beside the house and an original Crepe Myrtle *Lagerstroemia indica* nestles under its canopy. Note the two branches that have fused together, creating a unique branch pattern. A new rose garden was created at the end of the oak lawn, with three pillar roses 'Nahema', planted amongst mainly David Austin roses: Abraham Darby, Heritage and Gertrude Jekyll.

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Past the pond, along the path leading to the pool, is a beautiful *Magnolia grandiflora* planted in the 1950s. In the opposite lawn we planted a Tulip Tree *Liriodendron tulipifera* to replace one we unfortunately lost in the drought.

Other beautiful new additions to the front garden include mass plantings of other David Austin roses, rugosa roses, echiums, daylilies, iris, daphne, plectranthus, hydrangea, rhododendron 'Wedding Gown', azalea and star jasmine grown as hedges. New smaller trees of dogwood, lilac, Lagerstroemia "Natchez", luculia and wintersweet, as well as waterhousia and viburnum hedges, help marry the new garden with the old.

The rear garden and vast lawns also house beautiful specimen trees. The oldest of these, part of the original plantings, include Himalayan Cedar, Golden Elm *Ulmus glabra* 'Lutescens', Pin Oak, Copper Beech *Fagus sylvatica forma purpurea* and Cypress. There is also a common Ash, probably planted in the 1950s.

We recently lost a large Golden Poplar in the storms in late October 2021. We were very fortunate to have it land completely across the lawn, without damaging nearby trees. A woodland circle, with three new Dodwoods *Cornus Florida Alba* have been nestled here and underplanted with new woodland treasures, including hostas, double hellebores, thalictrum, aquilegia, astrantia, anemones and trillium.

Paul has kept the rear garden as large open parkland that provides space for these magnificent trees to shine. The original driveway, now a path to the rear of the property, passes a fantastic old grafted Ash, grown around an original Hills Hoist washing line that was used as its support. In 2014, we lost a large Liquidambar in the centre of the lawn. Turf was removed from where the new vegetable patch now stands and was placed over the stump area. This area was left to settle for three years and a new Liquidambar to replace it was planted in the lawn nearby to help give balance to the garden and help the garden continue to evolve with newly planted trees, given the age of the others. The rear gardens also have mass plantings of gorgeous viburnums, rhododendrons, hellebores, mayas, philadelphus, sedum and several species of hydrangea. Many varieties of hellebore have bloomed incredibly well, as have tall spires of foxgloves and groundcover cyclamen. The lawn area has mass plantings of autumn and spring flowering bulbs to create a beautiful carpet under the deciduous trees. Daffodils, jonquils, bluebells and crocus all create a beautiful flower carpet when so much else is still dormant. Espaliered lime trees frame a small vegetable/herb garden crammed with as much as I can grow there.

We completed a new vegetable patch in late 2014, and have altered the existing, making room to grow seven varieties of raspberries and thornless blackberries and blueberries. Espaliered lemons and the front 'fences' have been removed to open up the vegetable patch and 'merge' it with the new. These new large beds have a wonderful full sun position, lots of air circulation and are a wonderful size for a home kitchen garden. New fruit trees, blood oranges *Ficus Carica*, fig *St Dominique Violette*, and a pomegranate have also been planted.

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The beautiful handmade copper swings hanging from trees in both the front and back lawn, as well as the steel and wicker swing on the rear terrace, were sourced from an artist outside of London. If you would like further information about them please see Merryn, the garden owner. These beautiful, useful pieces are very much at home amongst the greenery.

Banool has been open to the public on Open Garden weekends, and for groups by appointment, for several years now. I hope that you enjoy wandering the grounds. Some areas continue to be altered, as any garden requires over time, with plants maturing and the loss of some mature trees. It was difficult to start gardening in the middle of the drought, however, with good planning and the installation of underground tanks totalling 160,000 + litres, we should be able to keep the necessary moisture up to these beautiful gardens.

More than our fair share of possums also pose a challenge and you may notice grazing evident especially on the acer 'October Glory', roses and grape vine. Since the garden has been planted, I have delighted in finding special pieces for the garden, as well as constantly adding little gems. These include beautiful rare galanthus, fritillaria, primula vialii, epimedium, parrot tulips, paris, trillium and liatris.

In 2021, a new formal buxus parterre was added at the top of the driveway, giving this prominent bed a makeover, removing old woody rosemary hedges, while giving me a new topiary project to enjoy, and in 2023, a new citrus orchard and picking garden was added to the rear lawn.

Enjoy your visit to Banool.

Banool 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

