

GARDEN NOTES

THE NOOK

A few words to describe 'The Nook' and its environs.

My late husband Don and I moved into our cottage, naming it 'The Nook' 16 years ago, and started creating our favourite kind of garden – the romantic English cottage style. Sadly, Don passed away in 2007, but our motto was always to share this piece of heaven with others. Don was my mentor, and I open it in his memory. The original cottage, circa 1920, was the abode of a generation of fruit pickers, and over the years we have refurbished the cottage to make the delightful home and garden you see today.

As you enter you will see a group planting of three silver birches, this being the signature of Edna Walling, and of Don, who was a contemporary and fellow horticulturalist. The collection of azaleas, camellias, pieris and other flowering shrubs that surround this part of the garden are truly a joy in winter and spring.

Through the first picket gate and on the right is *Loropetalum chinense* 'Roseum' as well as fuchsias, rhododendrons (blue), camellias and other spring/summer flowering plants. On the left of the path is the herbaceous border. This is the beginning of the perennial collection which contains some well-known, as well as some quite rare species. In the background are the climbing roses 'Souvenir de Mme. Leonie Viennot' and 'Graham Thomas'.

The second clematis covered arch brings you into the Walnut Garden where shade lovers grow – many of the hellebores were propagated from seed imported from the UK. Returning to the brick path and on the left is the main Perennial Garden – in front of the framework are roses: 'Golden Showers' and 'Sally Holmes', and in the centre of this bed is 'Chinensis Mutabilis', seldom seen without dainty butterfly-like multi-coloured flowers. Continuing along the path the arch is clothed in rose 'Laura Ford' and *Clematis* 'Venosa Violacea'. On the trellises are roses 'Pinkie', 'Iceberg', 'Pride of Venus', 'Renae' and 'Nahema'. Across the bridge you pass many roses, so perfume is always in the air. The Gothic Arch is clothed in *Clematis* 'Lady Betty Balfour' and 'Rouguchi'.

You are most welcome to view the garden from the veranda surrounding the cottage. Do visit the Secret Garden featuring camellias, salvias, roses, ferns and hellebores.

I hope you enjoy your visit today and that the peace and tranquillity evident in this part of the Dandenong Ranges is enhanced by Open Gardens such as 'The Nook', the making of which has been, and will continue to be, a labour of love.

Val

These notes can be downloaded from the Open Gardens Victoria website
www.opengardensvictoria.org.au