

GARDEN NOTES

SHIRLEY CARN'S GARDEN

Welcome to my Australian plant and habitat garden. I purchased this property just over three years ago. All existing vegetation – consisting largely of environmental weeds! – was removed. I was fortunate to then have Tom Orton 'weave his magic' with the bobcat and rocks. The steep steps at the front were covered with soil, which created a gentle slope to the porch. My son-in-law applied his chainsaw skills to remove the extensive hedges.

The first plantings were the eucalyptus trees. There are many scattered around the garden and most are labelled. The multi-trunked dwarf *Corymbia citriodora* (Lemon-scented Gum), *Eucalyptus caesia* 'Silver Princess', *E. pulverulenta*, *E. albopurpurea* and *E. websteriana* are some of my favourites. In the rear garden are three Silver-leaved Mountain Gums (*E. pulverulenta*) which withstand strong winds. They have already survived a severe windstorm which blew over two wattles and three other eucalypts.

When I started planting it was a lot of trial and error. I had to use the pick to dig plant holes in the intermittent heavy clay. Many plants did not thrive in this heavy soil. In order to overcome this, I filled the holes with potting mix and put a layer of composted cow manure on the top. This was watered in with Seasol fertiliser. Roadside and sugar cane mulch have been used to retain moisture and improve the soil.

The creeper growing over the front porch is a *Hardenbergia comptoniana*. Amongst the rocks at the front are *Brachyscome*, *Scaevola*, *Wahlenbergia* and *Micromyrtus* – some of my favourite small plants. Along the low side of the block the plants of special interest are *Lambertia*, *Ericifolia* and *Orbifolia*. There are collections of *Epacris* and *Spyridium*, for which I have a special passion, and most which are named. I do water the *Epacris* in the summer. If they are not shaded by other plants, I make an 'umbrella' of bracken to protect them and remove it when it is cooler.

The local food plants at the rear of the property are for native birds and insects. *Bursaria spinosa* for butterflies and *Clematis* for seed-eating birds. *Goodenia* provides food for caterpillars, including one of the tiger moths. Native grasses provide habitat and nest sites for small birds including blue wrens, scrub wrens and thornbills, as well as seeds for the red-browed firetail. I now have frogs and lizards as well in the garden.

During your visit through my garden there will be Australian Plant Society members available to assist with the identification of plants.

Please enjoy your visit.