

AUSTRALIA'S TIMELESS GARDENS



Judith Baskin & Trisha Dixon



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GARDENS

*Written by
Judith Baskin
with
Trisha Dixon*

National Library of Australia
Canberra
1996

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Government House and Part of the Town of Sidney [sic] N.S. Wales, 1828
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Inset: One of the most ancient of plants, the King protea (*Protea cynaroides*) dates back 300 million years to the super continent of Gondwana before it broke up to form Australia, Africa, South America, New Zealand and New Guinea
Photograph by Trisha Dixon

Endpapers: *Angophora costata*, Smooth-barked Apple, Donald Boden's garden, Maianbar, NSW. Photograph by Robert

C O N T E N T S

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A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

Many people have been of great assistance to us in producing *Australia's Timeless Gardens*. In particular, we would like to thank Kate Fortune, formerly of the National Library of Australia. Her coordinating role and support were much appreciated. Also, we would like to thank the staff of the Pictorial section whose love of the collection is reflected in their helpful and interested attitude.

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Judith Baskin and Trisha Dixon
Canberra

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Looking at other people's gardens is an Australian national pastime. For many, it takes the form of a stroll through the neighbourhood on a Sunday afternoon. For others, it is a more serious, organised passion. Horticultural societies, garden clubs, the Australian Garden History Society, Australia's Open Garden Scheme, charities and municipalities all conduct garden visits, like those of the embassy gardens in the national capital. The aim of this book is to offer a very different garden tour, one that provides a picture of Australia's private gardens as they have developed over more than 200 years.

It draws on images selected from the Pictorial Collection of the National Library of Australia—a collection rich in images from private and public gardens, botanical gardens, nurseries, reserves and national parks. Our concentration is on the private gardens, but our story begins with a public one: the garden of the first Government House in Sydney. From there, we follow the development of private gardens from white settlement to the present day. The sketches, paintings, engravings and photographs chosen reflect the rich and varied history of gardens in Australia, their evolution and their timelessness.

N O T E O N P L A N T N A M E S

In general, common names of plants are followed by their botanical names in brackets, for example Swan River cypress (*Actinostrobus pyramidalis*). In some instances, where the plants are well known and it would seem pedantic to insert the botanical names, the common names only are used, for example eucalypts, roses, iris, wattle. However, if a particular species is referred to, its common name is given followed by the botanical name, for example black wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*) or black wattle (*Callicoma serratifolia*), to avoid confusion between plants. For many Australian plants there is no generally accepted common name and the botanical name of the genus is used. In such cases the botanical name only is given, for example *Hakea* spp. All botanical names are in italics. In the index botanical names are given in full with a reference from the common name.

C H A P T E R 1
The First Garden



The grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea australis*)
Photograph by Trisha Dixon

The First Garden

The first garden created in Australia by white settlers was at Sydney Cove in New South Wales. It was, of necessity, a vegetable garden. Convicts began digging it three days after the First Fleet arrived on 26 January 1788. Eleven ships of the First Fleet brought naval officers, marines and

voyage out. The first need upon landing at Port Jackson was shelter and the second was food. Gardens and farms were quickly established to provide food for when the stores brought on the First Fleet ships were exhausted.

The second map of the settlement shows that within three months of their arrival, the settlers had established three gardens beside Sydney Cove and a farm over the ridge on Farm Cove. The map was drawn by Francis Fowkes, a convict from the First Fleet.

The beginnings of the colony of New South Wales were synonymous with botany. Explorers, many accompanied by professional or amateur botanists and artists, had collected and drawn the unique flora of the new lands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans and made them known to European and English scientists and amateur botanists.

Sir Joseph Banks and his botanical artists accompanied Captain Cook on his first voyage of exploration. Banks was a wealthy young man, a Fellow of the Royal Society, with connections to the politicians of Britain, who had a deep interest in botany and had already undertaken a voyage to



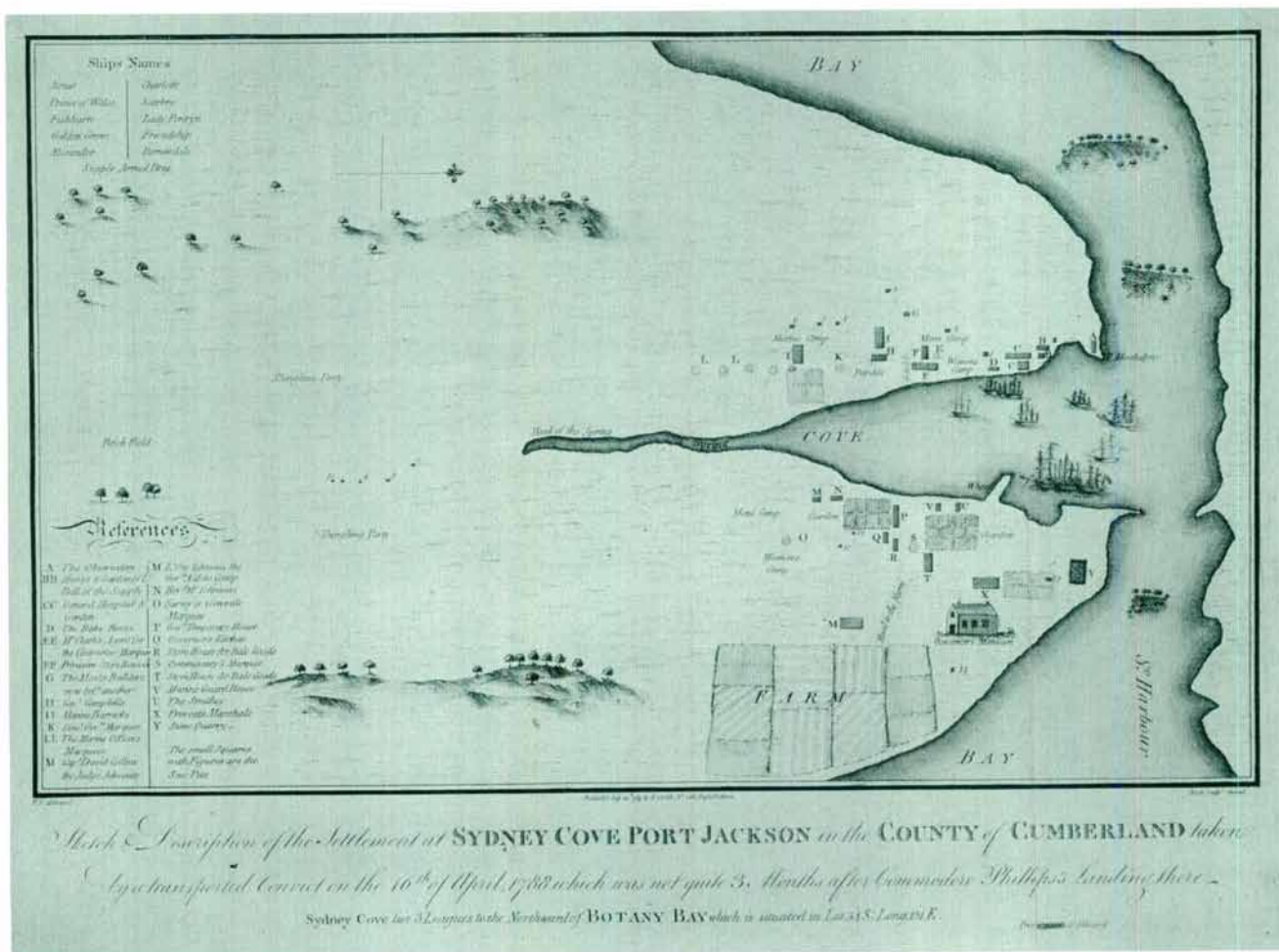
The first garden established by the new settlers at Sydney Cove in 1788

John Carmichael,
1803–1857
Detail from *Sydney*
N.S. Wales, 1788
etching; 7.7 x 16.6 cm
From the Pictorial
Collection

convicts to establish a settlement in New South Wales for strategic reasons and to help relieve the prisons of England of their excess of convicts. The Fleet brought with it stores, plants and seeds from England, supplemented by more plants and seeds collected at Cape Town and Rio de Janeiro on the

C H A P T E R I

The First Garden



The First Garden

Newfoundland and South Labrador. His reports of the land Cook named New South Wales were influential in the decision to establish the colony. Also of interest to a sea-going nation whose naval supplies of mast timbers and materials for sails were threatened by international crises were the reports of the strategic value of

New Zealand flax (*Phormium tenax*) and the Norfolk Island pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*).

On arrival at Botany Bay, so-named by Cook in recognition of the botanical richness he and Banks discovered in 1770, Commodore Arthur Phillip, the first Governor of New South Wales, found it unsuitable as a place to settle and chose instead the huge harbour, Port Jackson, immediately to the north.

In those first years supplies were limited; the colony almost starved. Supply ships were sent infrequently from Britain and some of them sank on the voyage out. It was the historian Geoffrey Blainey who noted that distance was as characteristic of Australia as mountains are of Switzerland and it was

because of the great distances separating the settlement from even the nearest Dutch colonies in the East Indies that alternative sources of supplies were so difficult to get.

The settlers depended on the stores they brought with them, the food they could grow and, until their stock of cattle increased, on hunting and fishing. But it wasn't long before they had fished out the harbour waters near them and lost some of their cattle in the bush. They supplemented what food they had by gathering indigenous plants, such as the native currant and leaves of seashore plants such as sea celery and New Zealand spinach (despite its name, an Australian plant), which Captain Cook had used to help prevent scurvy among his crews. Although the diversity of Australia's flora had created enormous interest in Europe, its usefulness, outside these examples, was still largely unknown.

Because the Aboriginal Australians were seen only as hunter gatherers, their knowledge of plants was discounted. However evidence is mounting that they did manage plants. Fire was used for a variety of purposes. In Cape York, for example, one use of fire is thought to have been to clear competing

Watkin Tench, an officer in the marines, describes the difficulties in obtaining supplies

Lines reproduced from
A Complete Account of the Settlement
by Watkin Tench
(London: G. Nicol, 1795)

The First Garden

vegetation away from the cycads whose seeds were a staple food (although poisonous until treated). Fire also stimulated seed production. The Aborigines of Cape York limited the exploitation of yams such as ka-aatha and thampu and replanted the productive top of the tuber. Aborigines were also thought to plant seeds of wattles and other plants used for food along the trails they followed. Despite all this, their knowledge of plants was not understood or put to general use by the new settlers.

Among the problems confronting the settlers were the relative poorness of the soil compared to that in their home countries and the confounding climate. Further, much of the seed deteriorated on

the long voyage out and unfortunately, no-one thought to provide Governor Phillip with gardeners. This seems almost inexplicable, particularly as Banks had employed a gardener and an assistant to sail in the HMS *Bounty* to collect bread fruit from Tahiti at about the time the First Fleet was being assembled.

In May 1788, HMS *Supply* was despatched to get turtles from Lord Howe Island for the colony which was already running out of supplies. And in 1790, HMS *Sirius*, together with HMS *Supply*, was sent to Norfolk Island with marines and more than 200 convicts to reduce the strain on the starving colony. According to Watkin Tench, an invitation from a 'lucky man who had knocked down a dinner with his gun, or caught a fish by angling from the rocks, [and] invited a neighbour to dine with him, always ran "Bring your own bread"'.

In a letter to Lord Sydney, Secretary of the Home Department, in November 1788, Governor Phillip writes that the oranges, figs, apples and vines he had brought from Brazil were thriving and in his garden, vegetables were plentiful including cauliflowers and French beans, and strawberries from the Cape of Good Hope. But the fruit trees were some years off



Extensive vegetable gardens of the first Government House
William Bradley, c.1757–1855
View of the Governor's House at Sydney in Port Jackson, New South Wales, 1791
watercolour; 21.6 x 56 cm
From the Pictorial Collection

The First Garden

Productive gardens surround the houses on Sydney Cove

Edward Dayes,
1765–1804

South View of the Town of Sydney,
1797

watercolour;
17.5 x 24.2 cm
From the Pictorial
Collection



bearing and there were not enough vegetables to feed the colony.

William Bradley, first officer of the *Sirius*, produced one of the first watercolour paintings of the settlement. His *View of the Governor's House*, painted in 1791, shows the rectangular and square beds of a utilitarian garden where vegetables are the prime produce. The symmetrical central path is edged with what might be shrubs or food plants. The terrace is also utilitarian, a place for the marine guards and for guns pointing at the Cove. By 1792 elements of decoration had crept in showing that

Robert Bruce,
c.1855–1908
Detail from
*The Norfolk Pines
in the Botanical
Gardens, Sydney*
in *Illustrated Sydney
News*, 1872
wood engraving;
19 x 11.2 cm
From the Pictorial
Collection

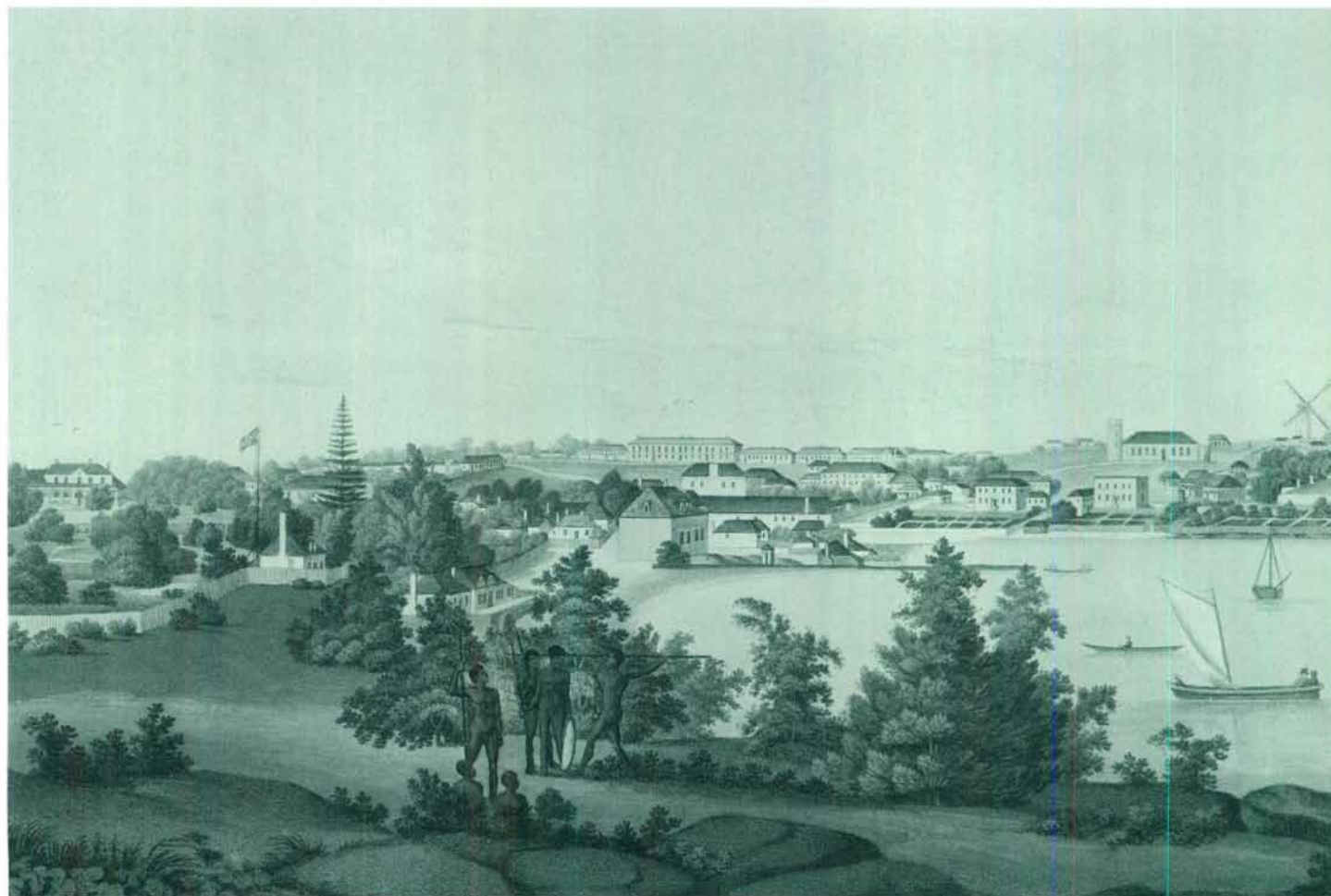
conditions were easing. There are two round planted beds on the terrace, and round beds interrupt the ordered vegetable garden. Young trees, possibly fruit trees, are growing in the centre of each bed. A Norfolk Island pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*), with its distinctive silhouette, is planted to one side of the garden. It had been brought back for the Governor by one of the ships visiting Norfolk Island.

While most of the plants and seeds brought to New South Wales in the First Fleet were for food production, some decorative plants were also brought out. For example, Surgeon Bowes Smyth brought the hardy geranium (*Pelargonium* spp.), together with grape vines. They prospered in the poor and arid soil.

The droughts of the 1790s and the long periods between supply ships from Britain and India meant that supplies were almost at zero on a number of occasions, but gradually matters improved. By the time the watercolour *South View of the Town of Sydney* was painted in 1797 the colony was no longer in desperate straits. The ordered garden beds in front of many of the houses are still mainly planted with

C H A P T E R I

The First Garden



Lawns, shrubs and trees make a decorative garden at Government House. This aquatint has been engraved by John Heaviside Clark from an original work by John Eyre

John Heaviside Clark, c.1770–1865
New South Wales, View of Sydney from the East Side of the Cove, 1810
hand coloured aquatint; 41.2 x 55.2 cm
Rex Nan Kivell Collection;
from the Pictorial Collection

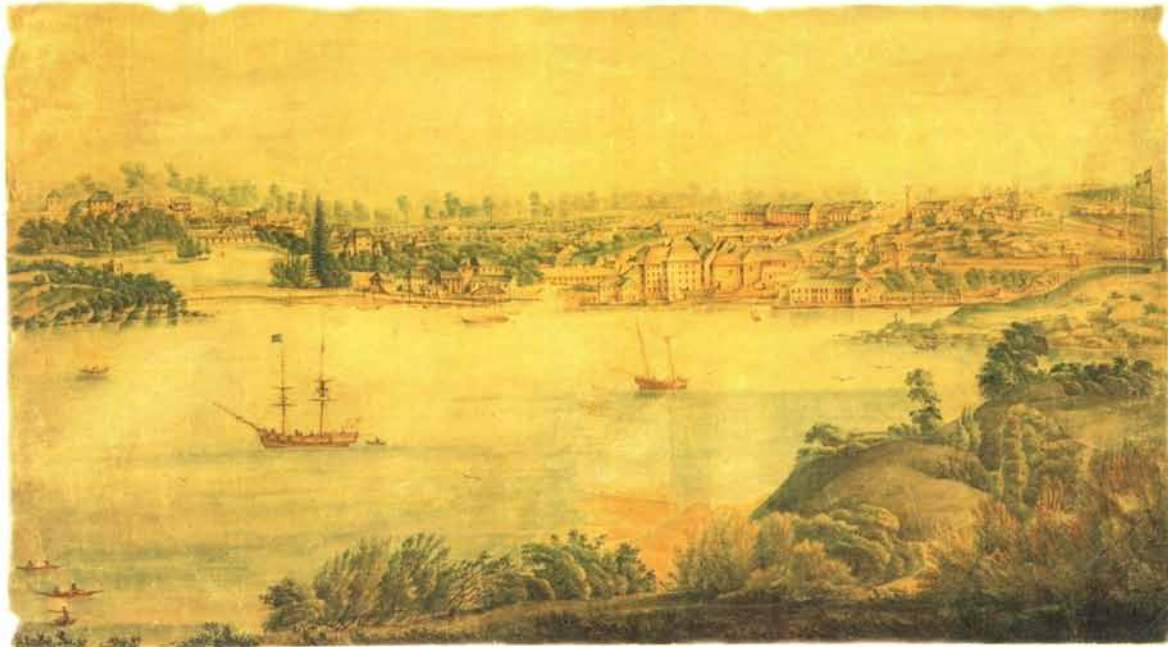
The First Garden

vegetables, but the garden of Government House was becoming more decorative than productive.

The first gardens of the settlers were very plain and laid out in geometric order. They were at one with the unadorned Georgian architecture of the first houses. Vines, though grown for the grapes,

introduced a decorative element as they clothed the walls of the houses.

By early in the new century, the garden of Government House showed that subsistence was no longer the sole preoccupation of the people living in the colony. In *New South Wales, View of Sydney from*



A Norfolk Island pine
marks the site of
Government House

J.W. Lewin, 1770–1819
*View of Sydney Looking
South, c.1811*
watercolour;
32.4 x 58.5 cm
Rex Nan Kivell Collection;
from the Pictorial
Collection

The First Garden

the East Side of the Cove, the artist shows how the grounds of Government House have developed. The vegetable gardens have given way to shrubs and grass. A garden bed is surrounded by a path. The Norfolk Island pine is already a stately height. In the background houses can be seen still surrounded by geometric beds of vegetables.

Governor Bligh, in his brief and troubled term of office, contributed to a transition in style that became evident elsewhere in the colony. He redesigned the ordered garden of Government House to one in the picturesque style. John Lewin's watercolour shows lawns sweeping down to the water, native trees on the left of the house providing a park-like setting, and a decorative stand of trees in the middle of the lawn. The distinctive outline of the Norfolk Island pine marks the site. The picket fence is no longer visible and a stone or cement wall runs along the Cove's edge.

Less than twenty years after the settlement was established in Sydney there was leisure time and more freedom from the demands of food production to think about the decorative design of gardens. Admittedly, the Governor's residence would have the trappings of a decorative garden before other houses, but as one of

the most painted and drawn sites it gives us an indication of the progress of the new colony.

In England, the picturesque style which Governor Bligh adopted succeeded the landscape style. Though both styles appear somewhat similar to us, they differed from each other in detail. Indeed, the picturesque is regarded by some as more an intellectual concept than a style. However, both styles were in opposition to the formal garden—the artificial, the straight line, the parterre and topiary—and both styles imitated nature. They were informal, 'natural' and curvilinear, though classical 'incidents' such as temples were allowed. They were more suited to large and medium-sized gardens rather than small gardens, though a clever designer could adapt them to a smaller space.

The picturesque differed from the landscape style in that more formality was allowed close to the house and in wilder elements such as grottoes, waterfalls and chasms. Both styles were, of course, contrived. In England, whole villages were moved by some designers to create the effect they wanted; the art was in making them seem natural. Both styles were described by Nan Fairbrother as 'the simple life in satin slippers'. Possibly

C H A P T E R I

The First Garden

Major James Taylor drew the productive cottage garden beside the Military Hospital, Sydney. Later in London the engraver, Robert Havell, added the foreground flowers



Robert Havell, 1769–1852
Detail from
The Entrance of Port Jackson and Part of the Town of Sydney, 1825
hand coloured aquatint; 47.8 x 65 cm
Rex Nan Kivell Collection; from the Pictorial Collection

One of the larger houses built in the new colony with a garden in the picturesque style. This engraving is based on an original work by John Eyre



W. Preston
View of the Seat of Woolloomoola [sic], near Sydney in New South Wales, 1815
engraving; 29.1 x 42 cm
Rex Nan Kivell Collection; from the Pictorial Collection

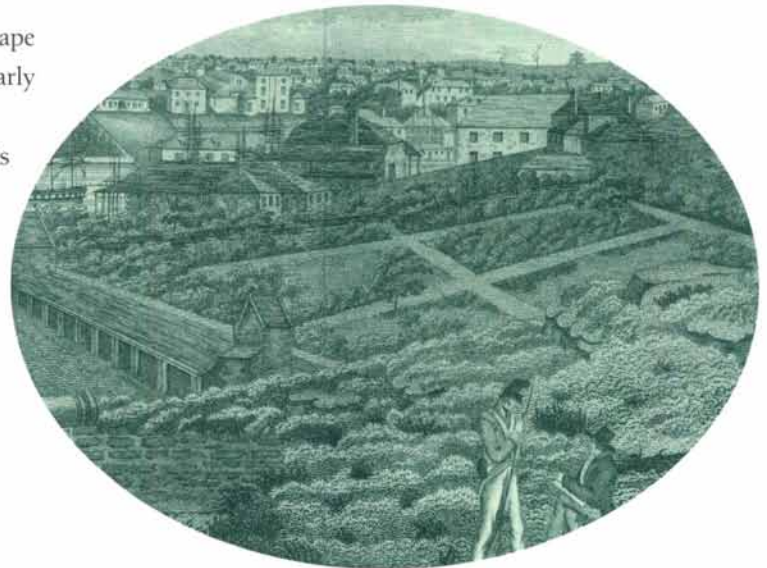
work by John Eyre. It shows a developed garden with a carriage drive. Nature is tamed in that many trees have been cut and the bush has retreated behind the house. Some trees are left standing decoratively in the grass. A substantial fence and gates enclose the sides and back of the house. Lewin's engraving of 'the seat of Ultimo' also shows a garden in the picturesque style.

James Wallis's aquatint of the Cove from Dawes' Point shows the garden of Robert Campbell next to his house and behind his wharfage on the west side of Sydney Cove. The garden is shielded from the wharf buildings by a row of what appear to be stables. Earlier this garden was, like others, laid down to vegetables. But by this time the geometric beds, surrounded by paths, contain grass, shrubs and trees. It has become a 'gentleman's' garden.

the artists' impressions of Australia's natural landscape contributed more to the picturesque style in the early paintings than did the actual design.

About the same time as Lewin painted his watercolour of Government House, the *View of the Seat of Woolloomoola [sic], near Sydney in New South Wales* was engraved from an original

Robert Campbell's garden on the west side of Sydney Cove
Reproduced from
An Historical Account of the Colony of New South Wales and its Dependent Settlements
by James Wallis (London: R. Ackermann, 1821)
Plate II



C H A P T E R 1

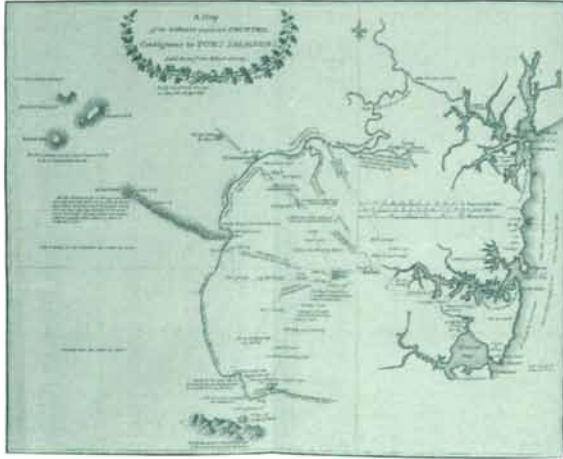
The First Garden



The First Garden

A map of the hitherto explored country, contiguous to Port Jackson: laid down from actual survey

Reproduced from
A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson in New South Wales
by Watkin Tench
(London: G. Nicol, 1795)



A further record of the very early gardens of Sydney comes from Major James Taylor who was posted to Sydney, arriving in 1817. His panorama of Sydney and Port Jackson appears in three published aquatints. In the grounds of the Military Hospital there is a cottage and outhouses. Vines grow on the wall of the cottage and stately flowers line the fence. A convict labours in the vegetable garden, officers chat between the cottage, kitchen and wash house, a lady, child and servant walk along the path, a kangaroo and fowls graze, and a dog supervises convicts moving wood. Labour and leisure

mix. To the right are the formal grounds of the hospital with picket fences, sentry boxes and regular plantings of trees along the fence and formal paths. In the background are the picturesque grounds of Government House. The houses on the slopes to the south of Government House show four geometric layouts.

Just how close the artists' images are to the early gardens is impossible to say. Clearly, some of the features described above have been imposed by the engraver in England, for after comparing Major Taylor's original watercolours and the engravings made from them, it is apparent that the flowers in the foreground and the layout of some of the distant gardens were added in London, perhaps to make the scene more attractive. Another indication that we should not rely on all the observations of the early artists is in the drawings of eucalypts with their leaves standing up instead of hanging down. It is possible that the picturesque aspect of paintings and engravings such as the one of Woolloomooloo may have been imposed by the painter rather than the gardener. However, the French artist Sigismond Himely's view of Woolloomooloo shows a picturesque garden too.

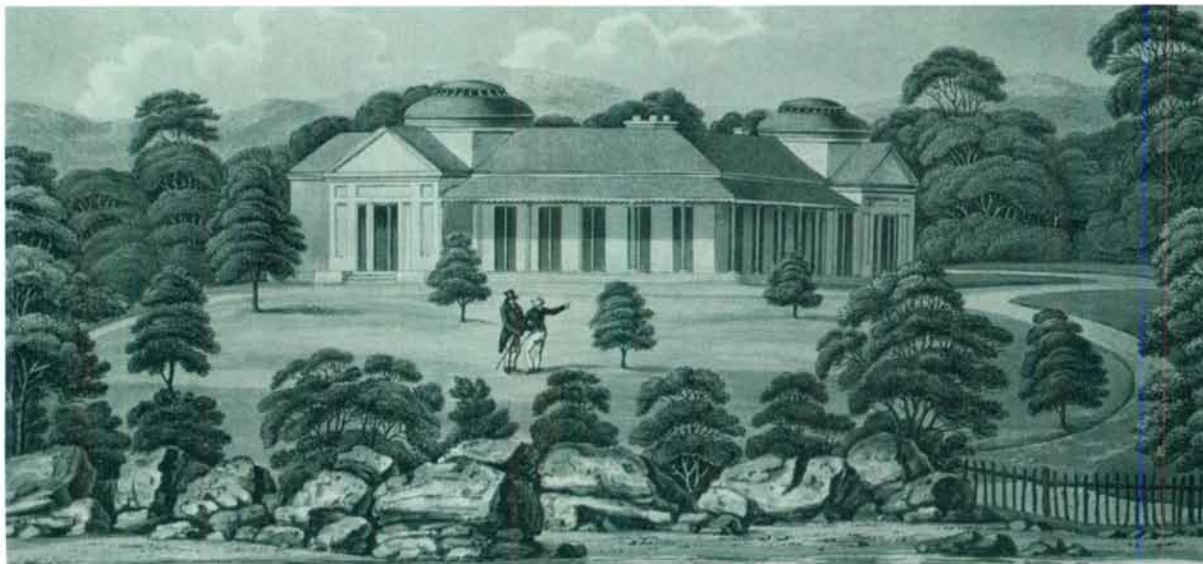
The First Garden

Joseph Lycett's views may be somewhat more reliable as he added text to support his paintings which record the colony at the end of its third decade. Lycett was a portrait and miniature painter transported for forgery. But we cannot be entirely sure that he too did not impose the English view of the landscape on the Australian setting.

By the end of the third decade the range of buildings and gardens had increased. There were

stately colonial Georgian and Regency villas scattered around the harbour, and the Governor's house at Rose Hill and the Parramatta settlement showed some signs of maturity.

Lycett's *View of Captain Piper's Naval Villa at Eliza Point near Sidney* [sic] shows a picturesque garden around a Colonial Regency house. Other views of this garden show that behind the house was a vegetable garden surrounded by a picket fence in a cruciform



Captain Piper's garden on the shores of Port Jackson is picturesque in style with a mixture of indigenous and exotic plants

Joseph Lycett,
c.1775–1828
Detail from *View of Captain Piper's Naval Villa at Eliza Point near Sidney* [sic], *New South Wales*, 1825
hand coloured aquatint;
25 x 55 cm
Rex Nan Kivell Collection;
from the Pictorial
Collection

The First Garden

The wilderness made picturesque. Bushland has been cleared to make a garden around Burwood Villa, which lay between Sydney Cove and Rose Hill

Joseph Lycett,
c.1775–1828
*Burwood Villa,
New South Wales,
the Property of
Alexander Riley Esqr.,
1825*

hand coloured aquatint;
25.2 x 55 cm
From the Pictorial
Collection

shape. The house was shaded by eucalypts and casuarinas, and oranges, peaches, apricots and nectarines grew behind it. The garden of Burwood Villa is in the picturesque style. But the wildness of the surrounding country, some distance from the main settlement, necessitates an inner fence around the house. The style was achieved at a price, for as Lycett notes, 'it is a remarkable instance how speedily the forest in New South Wales can be

cleared of its superfluous timber'. His description of the richness of fruits growing in these gardens is that of a person from a colder climate. Some of the fruits he is describing only grew in glass houses, if at all, in Britain.

So from a starving colony in 1788, by its third decade the colony's gardens were exciting interest because of the diversity of their plants. The first botanical garden had been established at Rose Hill, followed by the gardens which became the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney. The first nursery had been established by Thomas Shepherd near the site of the future University of Sydney and its first stocks had been obtained from the gardens already established in the colony.

Though the gardens in the towns of Sydney and Parramatta were still largely geometric in layout, the English picturesque style is represented in the paintings and engravings of the larger gardens. At Government House, the vegetable garden started three days after the First Fleet arrived had become an elegant garden.



C H A P T E R 2
The Garden Grows



Nineteenth-century garden
created by Australian author and botanical illustrator
Louisa Meredith (1812-1895)
Spring Vale, Swansea, Tasmania
Photograph by Trisha Dixon

The Garden Grows

It was on the coast of this timeless and inhospitable land with its arid soil, hostile climate and variation in conditions that the new settlers and convicts began to spread and to garden. Most came from the cities and towns of England and Ireland where many people had no garden to speak of, living in terrace houses that opened straight onto the street. If there was a backyard, it was often a tiny, dank, shaded place for the privy and the coal. Only in the country were gardens common, and even then many cottagers lacked the land or the resources to invest in them.

In the colonies, of course, there was no such shortage of land, and it was Governor Phillip who was responsible for a tradition that endured till recently—that of the quarter acre block. Just what influenced him to nominate this size is not completely clear, though, at the time, planners developing model villages in England were recommending this as a good size for a cottage garden: a block with enough space around the cottage for the household to grow their own vegetables and later some decorative plants.

New gardens in the settlement of Newcastle
Sophia Campbell, 1777–1835
Newcastle with Christ Church in the Distance, c.1820
watercolour; 22.8 x 57.8 cm
From the Pictorial Collection



The Garden Grows

Victor Crittenden in his book, *The Front Garden*, has observed that the front garden was seen as a right for the early settlers, and that 'the first garden cities were actually Australian cities in practice if not in idea'.

The separated garden spaces shown in the previous chapter 'The First Garden' are also reflected in Sophia Campbell's drawings around Sydney and Newcastle, the new colony founded in 1801 at the mouth of the Hunter River. Sophia Campbell, the first woman artist in Australia and wife of the merchant Robert Campbell, painted Newcastle between 1818 and 1820. Picket fences march over the landscape demarcating each plot. Newcastle looks rather like a new suburban tract on the edge of a modern city. This is because of the size of each block.

Though the settlement of Hobart was not established until 1803, the first planting of exotic species on the island occurred in 1773 when Furneaux, one of Cook's companions, planted two seedling apples and some fruit kernels. On his last voyage of exploration Cook visited the site, Adventure Bay, to ascertain their fate. It was no



surprise then that apples were among the first trees planted by the settlers who found a climate far more like Britain than any part of the continent of Australia. As was the case in Sydney, the early years were times of difficulty and the emphasis was on subsistence. The journal of the Reverend Robert Knopwood, the first chaplain of Hobart, describes his very successful garden through the difficult times from 1804 to prosperity for the settlement in 1838. By 1807, in fact, there was a glut of potatoes. He was generous with the produce, giving it to the Governor, to friends, to people in need and to visiting ships. From the ships he received in return seeds, fruit stones and trees from the ships' landfalls elsewhere, including New Zealand. By 1814 he describes in his

Picket fences delineate boundaries of gardens yet to be established
Sophia Campbell,
1777-1855
Newcastle, c.1820
watercolour,
22.8 x 57.8 cm
From the Pictorial
Collection



The Garden Grows

journal growing grass and shrubs and thenceforward his garden became a decorative as well as a productive one.

By the time Joseph Lycett visited Tasmania to paint the new settlement, there were many established gardens. Unhappily, his paintings do not show them

in detail. One of his prints of the Roseneath Ferry shows a fenced garden on the banks of the Tamar River and areas of thick growth, possibly orchards, to one side.

One of the early large gardens in Tasmania, which in 1996 is being restored by the National Trust and Richard Ratcliffe, a Canberra landscape architect, is Highfield, the home of the first manager of the Van Diemen's Land Company. The garden, first painted in about 1835, is shown as a picturesque landscape. Cows are grazing in the foreground, as in so many paintings of European landscapes, but in the middle distance are a pair of kangaroos and two emus (the latter now extinct in Tasmania).

Another painting (not shown) of Highfield in the Allport Library in Hobart, dated 1840, presents a different aspect of the garden. It shows the garden in the gardenesque style—a style which had recently become fashionable in England. Paths outline the stiff garden beds newly planted with young conifers, and a deciduous tree, possibly a birch, is shown in one corner. There is a grape and a rose on the wall near the house and flowers and young shrubs. A drive and lookout is to the front of the house.



Cleared landscape and fenced garden
of an early settlement near Hobart

Joseph Lycett, c.1775–1828
Detail from *Roseneath Ferry, near
Hobart Town, Van Diemens Land,*
1824

hand coloured aquatint;
25.5 x 55 cm

Bex Nan Kivell Collection; from the
Pictorial Collection

The Garden Grows



A picturesque landscape garden in Tasmania. By 1840 this garden was being redesigned in the new gardenesque style

Artist unknown
Highfield, Circular Head, Stanley, Tasmania, Residence for Edward Curr First Manager of the Van Diemen's Land Company, c.1855
oil on canvas;
25.5 x 50.5 cm
Rex Nan Kivell Collection;
from the Pictorial Collection

The Garden Grows

The two paintings of Highfield mark the transition point from the picturesque to the gardenesque style. This latter style is attributed to John Claudius Loudon, an English garden writer and publisher. Loudon popularised gardening as an art partly to help improve the human condition, founding *The Gardener's Magazine* in 1826 for this purpose. Through the magazine and his other writings, his designs and theories became known.

He considered that a garden should be recognised as a work of art, not an imitation of nature. He believed that the display of the characteristics of an individual plant was of more importance than the overall garden scheme. Flower gardens formerly banished to the extremities of a pleasure ground were installed around villa residences. The introduction of many 'new' plants and shrubs from overseas, including Australia, was another impetus towards the gardenesque style. Many of the tender plants from abroad could not withstand the British climate so were housed in glasshouses. Arboretums, herbariums and pinetums to display collections became fashionable. The gardenesque style could be adapted to any size garden from the smallest to the

largest and it quickly attracted the people of Victorian Britain. Australian gardens followed.

In Tasmania the botanical gardens were started in 1829, enclosed by two substantial walls which served



as protection from the Roaring Forties. And in 1836 the first-known Australian nursery catalogue was produced in Hobart. It was printed in the *Hobart Town Courier* and listed trees, shrubs, perennials, bulbs and vegetables. It listed some Australian plants starting with *Acacia* spp., *Eucalyptus* spp. ('all the varieties'—a large claim by the author), *Hakea*, three species of *Casuarina* and other common indigenous

Eucalypts provide the main canopy for this early Western Australian garden
H.W. Reveley,
1788–1875
My House and Garden in Western Australia,
1855
watercolour;
25.1 x 39.8 cm
Rex Nan Kivell Collection;
from the Pictorial Collection

The Garden Grows

plants. Lists, such as this one, can be helpful when identifying plants used at a particular time.

One of the first gardens depicted in Western Australia is the garden of Henry Reveley, its first engineer and architect. In his own drawing, which was included in a letter to England in 1833, he shows a garden which was partly utilitarian, partly decorative. A drive leads from the road. Ducks are 'posting off to a duck pond behind those trees' and 'the tail water, where there is always a dribble of water' has a wash house placed over it. Some kind of a scoop hangs over the water below. The flower and vegetable gardens are enclosed by a brush fence. Reveley's vegetable garden is laid out in geometric order. It contains cabbages, cauliflowers and onions and a separate potato bed. Decorative plants are in flower beds inside the enclosure, and there are vines and a tree mallow at the corner of the house. This garden owes less to any particular garden style than to a response to practical need. Outside the enclosed space, the garden has a spacious relaxed air about it.

In Victoria in 1845, Duncan Cooper, the son of Major General George Cooper who had served in India, painted his house at Chalicum. Two views show

different aspects of the garden. One shows something between a moat and a ha-ha (with a bridge over it) to keep out stock. Possibly an eroded creek bed, the ha-ha served the purpose of an unobtrusive fence. The painting shows garden beds and a eucalypt in the foreground. The other view, from the window of the house, shows the geometric layout of the garden beds more clearly and the way the ha-ha divides the garden

An eroded creek bed creates a natural ha-ha in this garden

Duncan Cooper,
c.1815-1904
Third Hut, Chalicum,
1845
watercolour;
14.8 x 21.7 cm
From the Pictorial
Collection





No visual barrier separates this charming cottage garden from the surrounding landscape

Duncan Cooper, c.1815–1904
*View from Window of Hut,
Challicum*, 1850
watercolour;
15.4 x 25 cm
From the Pictorial Collection

The Garden Grows

and house from the panorama. No effort has been made to block out the view or to isolate the viewer from it, in contrast to many gardens where the fence protected the house and shielded the occupants from the wide open spaces.

An exquisite album of watercolours by an artist known only by the initials E.T. shows several properties in the New England district of New South Wales in the 1840s. Moredun near the Macintyre River has a well-established garden. The drive is of dirt or gravel. There are a number of garden beds filled with shrubs and bamboos. Climbers on the verandah provide shade and the whole image gives an appearance of lushness even though there are no lawns.

In about 1853 Jane Dorothea Cannan drew an established cottage and garden such as one might see on the edge of country towns today. It stands on a slight rise with a comfortable verandah shielded by a trellis that does not obscure the view. A eucalypt guards the cottage to the front and eucalypts surround it at the back. Climbers give added shade on the verandah and shrubs edge the wire and timber fence which cuts the garden off from the track to the outhouses behind the cottage. This is a timeless image.



A lush garden at Moredun in the New England district of New South Wales

E.T.
Moredun from the Garden, c.1848
watercolour;
18.4 x 24.5 cm
Rex Nan Kivell Collection;
from the Pictorial
Collection



Although drawn in the 1850s, this cottage and garden could be seen in a country town today

Jane Dorothea Cannan,
1825–1861
Country Cottage,
c.1855
pencil; 17 x 26.1 cm
From the Pictorial
Collection

The Garden Grows

Clearly, gardens had become havens in this wide brown land. Major Mitchell, returning in 1836 from one of his long journeys and surveys of the south-east of Australia reached the district of the new town of Goulburn, 193 kilometres from Sydney, after seven months of exploration in previously unknown lands and he gratefully records:

I had arrived in a country which I myself had surveyed, and where the roads and

towns in progress were the first fruits of these labours ... I reached at twilight the house of a worthy friend, Captain Rossi, who received me with great kindness and hospitality ... A walk in the garden; a visit to the shearing shed; the news of colonial affairs in general; fat pullets cooked à la gastronome, and some good wine; had each in their turn rare charms for me.

C H A P T E R 3
Through the Artist's Eye



One of the most ancient of plants,
the King protea (*Protea cynaroides*) dates back 500 million years
to the super continent of Gondwana before it broke up to form
Australia, Africa, South America, New Zealand and New Guinea

Photograph by Trisha Dixon

Through the Artist's Eye

The discovery of gold in New South Wales and Victoria in 1851 signalled the beginning of a period of profound change in the social, economic and political structure of the colonies, and

the rising affluence of the free settlers was reflected in their gardens in the rapidly expanding towns and on the established properties. Free migration had been strongly promoted in the 1830s and 1840s and the

A gardener with his scythe, the tool used to cut grass prior to the invention of the lawn-mower
 G.E. Peacock, 1806-2
Craig End, Sydney;
 NSW, c.1850
 oil on academy board;
 25.2 x 54.8 cm
 Rex Nan Kivell Collection;
 from the Pictorial
 Collection



Through the Artist's Eye

discovery of gold provided a powerful incentive for many thousands more to follow. Among them were gardeners, nurserymen, botanists and trained garden designers; professionals who were able to benefit from the lessons of climate, soil and season that had been learnt the hard way by the early settlers.

The new gardenesque style was popular, but the influx of migrants from diverse backgrounds brought with it an infusion of influences which produced an eclecticism that can be seen in many Australian gardens today. While the English garden tradition continued to be the dominant influence, there were a number of other influences, including that brought to Australia by army officers who had served in India, and who were more familiar with harsh climates and wide landscapes than those who came directly from Europe—and less inclined to screen off the house and garden from the great spaces outside.

Not surprisingly, plants and trees introduced from Europe did better in colonies that had common climatic features. In the warmer parts of the continent, it was the hardy plants acquired from South America and Africa on the long journey from Britain that did particularly well, perhaps reflecting

the shared geological past of the three continents. Along with India, New Guinea and New Zealand, they once made up the super continent of Gondwana, probably explaining the striking



Hardy plants withstand the salt-laden winds in this Western Australian garden
Henry James Warre, 1819–1898
School House at King George Sound, W. Australia, 1860
watercolour; 14 x 20 cm
Rex Nan Kivell Collection; from the Pictorial Collection

similarities between plants, like the African proteas and the Australian waratah, and their ability to thrive, making possible the rich mix of indigenous and exotic plants in so many early gardens.

Henry Warre's watercolour of the School House at King George Sound in Western Australia shows a garden full of hardy succulents and cacti, *Strelitzia* spp., *Agave stricta*, eucalypts and native shrubs

C H A P T E R 3
Through the Artist's Eye



above
Prickly pear (*Opuntia* spp.) growing below the Mort residence at Darling Point, Sydney
George French Angas, 1822–1886

Greenoaks, T.S. Mort's House, Sydney, c.1855
pencil; 25.5 x 55.5 cm
Jose Calvo Collection;
from the Pictorial Collection

which stand up to the harsh salt-laden winds from the Antarctic. The house is reminiscent of India and of Cheltenham in England, home of many retired Indian officers.

In this period before photography, many artists roamed the country painting houses and gardens for the proud owners. George French Angas was an artist who enjoyed recording the gardens as well as the houses of the rich and the new middle class. One



of his drawings shows a rampant prickly pear (*Opuntia* spp.) which became a scourge to grazing lands in tropical areas of Australia. Brought here by the First Fleet, it was just one of the introduced species which slowly naturalised and became a major problem. Others are the briar (*Rosa canina*), the olive in South Australia and the bitou bush along the New South Wales coastline. (Ironically, the attractive bitou bush, possibly introduced to Melbourne as a garden plant, is displacing the indigenous *Acacia longifolia* and in South Africa, the home of the bitou bush, it is being threatened by the introduced *Acacia longifolia*.)

right
A grand landscape surrounds this romantic garden

Eugene von Guerard, 1811–1901
James Glass's Station on the Goulburn River, Victoria, 1862
oil on academy board; 55.7 x 45.8 cm
Bex Nan Kivell Collection;
from the Pictorial Collection

Through the Artist's Eye

The German painter Eugene von Guerard came to the Victorian goldfields in search of gold in the 1850s but he soon resumed painting which he had studied with his father, also a painter. He had many commissions to paint settlers' homes. His houses and gardens are on a grand scale and set in sweeping landscapes.

One of the best-known colonial painters, S.T. Gill, was also working during this period. In his paintings he depicted almost every aspect of life from gold mining to exploration, from sport to Aborigines. He also painted

houses and gardens. In many of these he captures the gardener at work with his equipment and records the garden seasons of the year.

As these images show, many gardeners mixed styles and, of course, many developed their gardens with no thought of a unified design. Fashionable gardenesque-style gardens, large formal gardens, cottage gardens and gardens of no particular style existed side by side. In many cases, they were influenced by writings and illustrations from overseas or by the horticultural journals and newspaper gardening columns that were published locally. Sometimes those fortunate to travel abroad brought back ideas with them. By late in the nineteenth century gardening was a popular subject and horticultural societies were being established.

In the interests of garden history, some of the surviving gardens of the nineteenth



Tropical plants enclosed by immaculately clipped edging
Yandilla Station, Queensland
From the Pictorial Collection

far left
Establishing a garden in the virgin soil
S.T. Gill, 1818–1880
Spring, c.1847
watercolour;
29.5 x 21.8 cm
From the Pictorial Collection

left
A rose flourishes in this settler's garden
S.T. Gill, 1818–1880
March, c.1847
watercolour;
21.8 x 18.2 cm
From the Pictorial Collection



Box hedge along the
carriageway in 1859
Durham Hall, Braidwood,
New South Wales
From the Pictorial
Collection

The same carriageway
more than a
century later
Durham Hall, Braidwood,
New South Wales
Photograph by
Trisha Dixon



century have been studied. Olive and Dick Royd's Durham Hall on the harsh plains of the Braidwood area of New South Wales is one of these. Their garden is basically a Victorian garden which has only

been modified over the years to accommodate extensions to the house and the death of major trees. It is thought that the first part of the garden was planted in the early 1840s. It was set out in a typical early Victorian style with symmetrically patterned box hedging detailing the carriage loop and nearby flower beds. Now the hedges have matured and

Through the Artist's Eye

grown over much of the old drive which is no longer used. The present drive goes to the back of the house in typical country fashion. The front door is rarely opened. A huge Atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica* or possibly *Cedrus libani*) dominates the garden, the last of four planted symmetrically on the northern side of the carriage loop. A weeping funeral cypress (*Cupressus funebris*) had to be cut down after it developed a dangerous lean only a few years ago. Windbreaks of elms and hawthorns were planted to the west for protection against the searing westerlies and north-westerlies of spring, summer and winter. There once was a vista from the front door through the concentric circles of the drive hedges past the cedars to a distant hill on which Lombardy poplars were planted as a terminus to the view but the mature garden now obscures much of this. There is a billowing hedge of roses and an enormous wisteria spreads across garages and sheds and climbs into the upper branches of a pine.

This garden shows the result of plants achieving their ultimate size, a problem few of us have to face in our lifetime. It also presents a conservation problem: should the box hedges, for example, be replaced by cuttings struck from the original plantings to make it once again the size the first gardener imagined or should the plants be allowed to live their normal life cycle?

The garden is full of unusual plants which, with changing fashions are no longer available from nurseries, such as an Osage orange

left
Inedible fruit from a favourite colonial hedging plant, Osage orange (*Maclura pomifera*)
Photograph by Trisha Dixon

below
Newly established gardens in the cleared landscape
François Cogné, 1829–1885
Buninyong, Victoria, c.1859
lithograph; 27.7 x 44 cm
From the Pictorial Collection



Through the Artist's Eye

(*Maclura pomifera*) and *Desmodium amethystinum* from Chile. There are a number of unidentified roses, including a yellow one planted around 1880.

The artists and amateur painters captured many historic scenes. Binnum Binnum painted by Stanley Leighton is a wonderful record from settlement to

Evolution of the
Australian homestead
and garden from slab
hut to Victoriana and
from dirt track to
gravel paths

Stanley Leighton,
1837–1901

Binnum Binnum,

Mr H. Jones's,

Tattiarra Country,

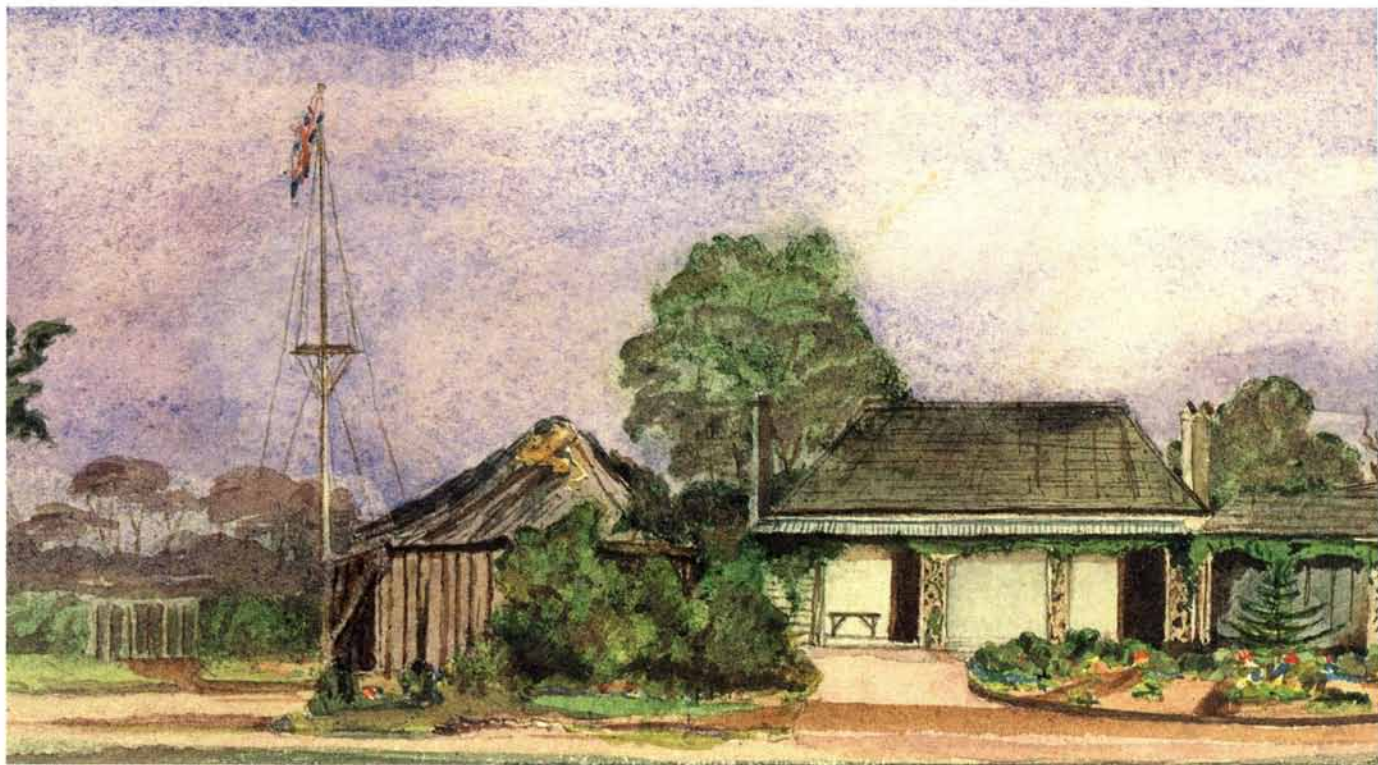
South Australia, 1868

watercolour;

8.7 x 53.5 cm

From the Pictorial

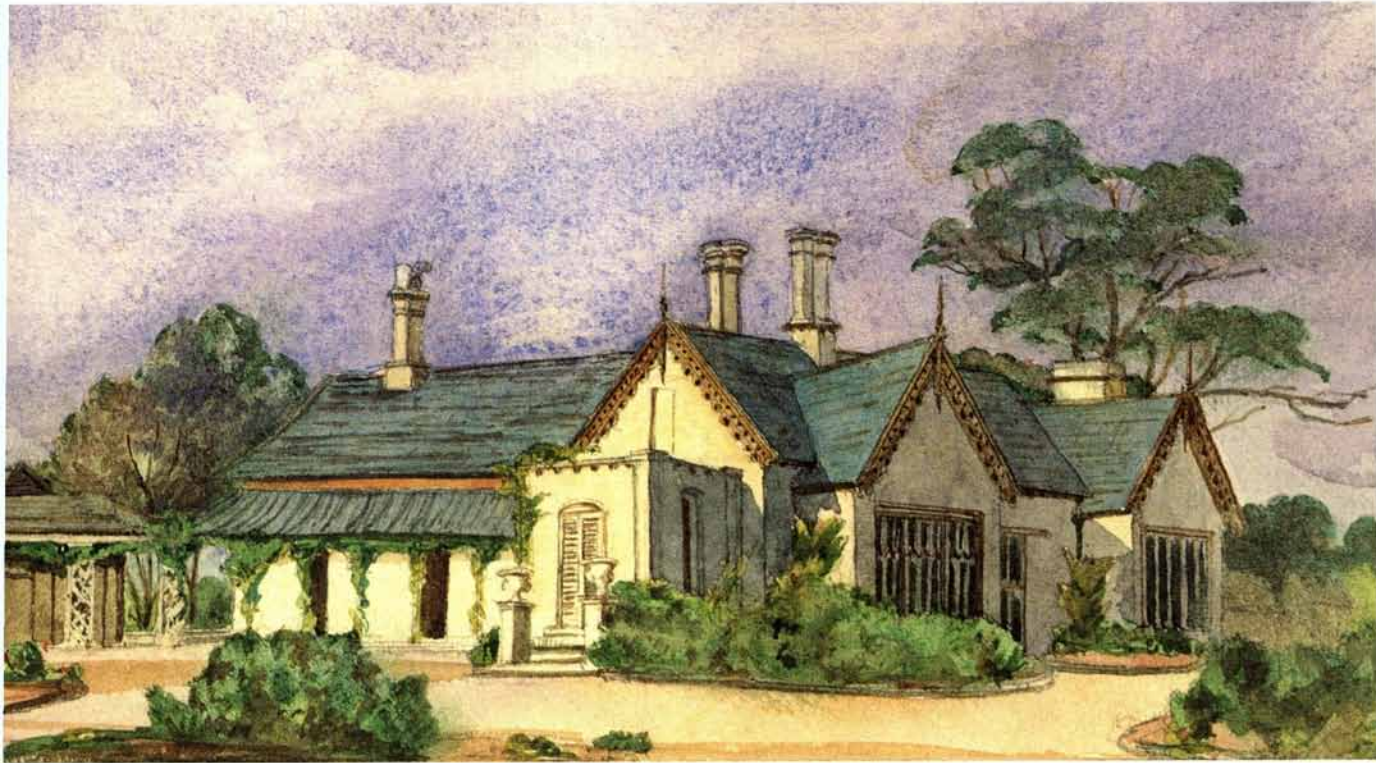
Collection



Through the Artist's Eye

prosperity in 1868. In the painting, the original slab hut is on the left and next to it is a pisé house which has been connected by a walkway to a new

substantial Victorian house. The garden, too, reflects the stages of development: from the rough grass and dirt track on the left to a formal drive and garden



Through the Artist's Eye

A natural windbreak of eucalypts protects this gardenesque-style garden from strong sea breezes

Frederick James Jobson, 1821–1881
Sydney from Botany at the Honble A. McArthur's, Glebe Point,
 1861
 watercolour;
 17 x 48.2 cm
 Rex Nan Kivell Collection;
 from the Pictorial Collection



right
 A homestead garden with a mix of indigenous and exotic plants

A Station in the North West, New South Wales
 Tyrell Collection; from the Pictorial Collection

background
 Australian landscaping and architecture at its grandest

Rupertswood, Sunbury, Victoria
 Reproduced from *Illustrated Australian News*, 7 October 1874
 From the Pictorial Collection

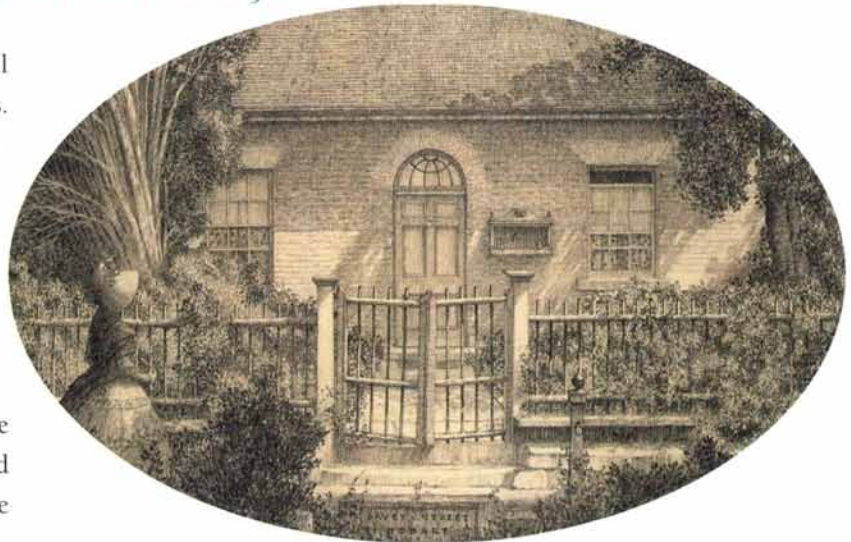
beds around the latest house. Stanley included this watercolour in his sketchbook and diary of a tour around South Australia in 1868. He records several services including communion for twenty at the homestead, a ball for seventy people and a kangaroo hunt in the weekend he was there.

In the boom period following the gold rushes, large and ornate houses in the Victorian Gothic style were built. Rupertswood, in Victoria, is a fine example. In 1874 there was a formal series of terraces and flights of steps descending the rise on which the house stood, but at the bottom there was a change of mood with a romantic pool overhung by willows.



Through the Artist's Eye

Splendid photograph albums in the National Library of Australia's collection record many gardens. Photographs were taken by the owners of the garden, by visitors and by itinerant photographers—all of whom began to replace the artist as the recorder of Australian life. The Library has a photograph of 'A Station in the North West' taken by Charles Kerry. The eucalypts have been kept as a frame for this garden. There seems to be a mix of Australian and exotic plants, the white cedar (*Melia azedarach*), oleanders and something not unlike saltbush. The climbers on the



verandah are carefully shaped giving deep shade in the heat of the summer. While identifying plants from photographs or paintings is an uncertain business, if these plants are what we think they are, then this garden is particularly interesting because of the acceptance of the local flora.

Town house surrounded by cottage garden
Hardy Wilson,
1881-1955
Detail from *Davey Street, Hobart*, c.1918
pencil; 55.3 x 45.5 cm
From the Pictorial Collection



Little is known about Australian garden designers of the nineteenth century except for William Guilfoyle. He was the son of an English landscape gardener who trained under the great Sir Joseph Paxton in Britain, gardener to the Duke of

left
A Guilfoyle-designed landscape in the Western District of Victoria
Mawvalok, Beaufort, Victoria
Photograph by Trisha Dixon

Architectural planting
typified by William
Guilfoyle
Mooleric, Birregurra,
Victoria
Photograph by
Trisha Dixon



Devonshire. His grandfather was steward of the Tichborne estates and responsible for the splendid landscape gardens there. His mother's forebear was

Count Louis Delafosse, an adviser to Louis XIV on his gardens. In the late 1840s William Guilfoyle migrated to Australia with his father. At first he worked in the nursery his father established at Double Bay. In 1863 he undertook a voyage to the South Seas collecting plants and six years later he settled on the Tweed River in northern New South Wales, growing sugar cane, collecting local plants and establishing a tropical garden. Many of the plants he collected were sent to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne. In 1873 he succeeded Baron Ferdinand von Mueller as director of the gardens and set about transforming them.

In philosophy he followed the English school of landscaping: design should follow nature, not the formal lines of European gardens. He considered that landscape beauty had been sacrificed to correct geographical classification of plants and he changed the gardens considerably. The absence of lawns and the presence of 'unnatural' avenues of trees which resulted from von Mueller's work did not agree with his design philosophy. Like his father's mentor, Paxton, he moved many trees to achieve the effects he wanted; in the summer of 1874–75 he successfully moved 832 trees,

C H A P T E R 3

Through the Artist's Eye



Through the Artist's Eye

The vibrant garden of the great
artist and intrepid traveller
Ellis Bowan

Ellis Bowan, 1848–1922
*Ellis Bowan's Garden at Derriweil,
Mount Macedon, c.1885*
watercolour: 28.6 x 18.4 cm
From the Pictorial Collection

losing only six. He deepened the lagoon to make it an ornament rather than the swampy marsh it formerly was. He used *Eucalyptus ficifolia* the Western Australian flowering gum, *Magnolia grandiflora*, rhododendrons and jacarandas (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*) to clothe the islands in the lagoon. He planted masses of annuals to provide much-needed colour. All this was done at first with shortages of staff and skilled supervisors.

He followed the same landscape style in his private garden designs. Sweeping wide lawns offset grand stands of trees and architectural plants, such as agaves, cordylines, yuccas and the Canary Islands palm, gave textural contrast.

Guilfoyle received both praise and blame for his work. Some considered he had failed, some that he had triumphed. He ignored both schools of thought. Finally, his designs using plants suited to Australian conditions were considered to be in the best traditions of the English landscape school. The ideas he put to work at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne and in his private garden designs influenced many people. It was his strong approach to design which has allowed much of his work to survive.

C H A P T E R 4
Back to Basics



The productive garden
Birchfield, Bungendore, New South Wales
Photograph by Trisha Dixon



Isolated bush cottage
from an album of
photographs *Victoria
through the Camera*,
taken about 1898
From the Pictorial
Collection

The cottage garden concept came to Australia with the first settlers but it evolved through a series of overlaid styles. Just as in Britain where among the flowers grew the vegetables for the family, including nettles (*Urtica dioica*) and dandelions (*Taraxacum* spp.), and where the fowls

Back to Basics

scratched, the aim was to be productive as well as pretty. Although having some lawn was not unknown in English cottage gardens of the nineteenth century, it became far more dominant in Australia because of the space available. Later, the emphasis on outdoor living that began with the introduction of the private tennis court was accentuated with outdoor eating and the arrival of the swimming pool and barbeque.

Whether the land owner was affluent or poor, the theme of productivity was a common feature of early Australian gardens. Fresh vegetables were important and difficult to obtain and their presence is evident in the illustrations of gardens of large town houses and prosperous properties of the later nineteenth century, as well as those belonging to settlers who struggled through the depression of the 1890s.

Another gardening tradition that began in the nineteenth century is the Chinese market garden. Indeed, one which has been near the Cook's River, in Sydney, since last century is still worked by people who sell the produce locally.

Just as artists roamed the country mid-century, photographers began to travel through it later in the



Rudimentary
productive garden
Gippsland, Victoria
Photograph by
Nicholas Caire
From the Pictorial
Collection

century, recording not just the homes of the established and affluent but the houses of the new settlers as well. In the 1890s depression the gardens around new houses and humpies reverted to being subsistence or productive gardens. In one photograph from the period a woman with children sits in front of an L-shaped building, a house

Formal kitchen garden
Garangula, Harden,
New South Wales
Photograph by
Trisha Dixon



Back to Basics

right
Rural Solitude

Photograph by
Charles Kerry
Tyrrell Collection; from
the Pictorial Collection

evidently built in stages. Parts of it are of undressed timber and parts are plastered over. The garden, laid out in neat beds, is well kept and vegetables grow in rows. Though modest it has an air of confidence.

below

Lilies, sunflowers,
daisies and pumpkin
flourish outside this
bush humpy

Photograph by
Charles Kerry
Tyrrell Collection; from
the Pictorial Collection

Charles Kerry, who photographed many cottages and bushmen's huts, captured a bush humpy set against the cleared forest. Tall sunflowers, lilies and daisies

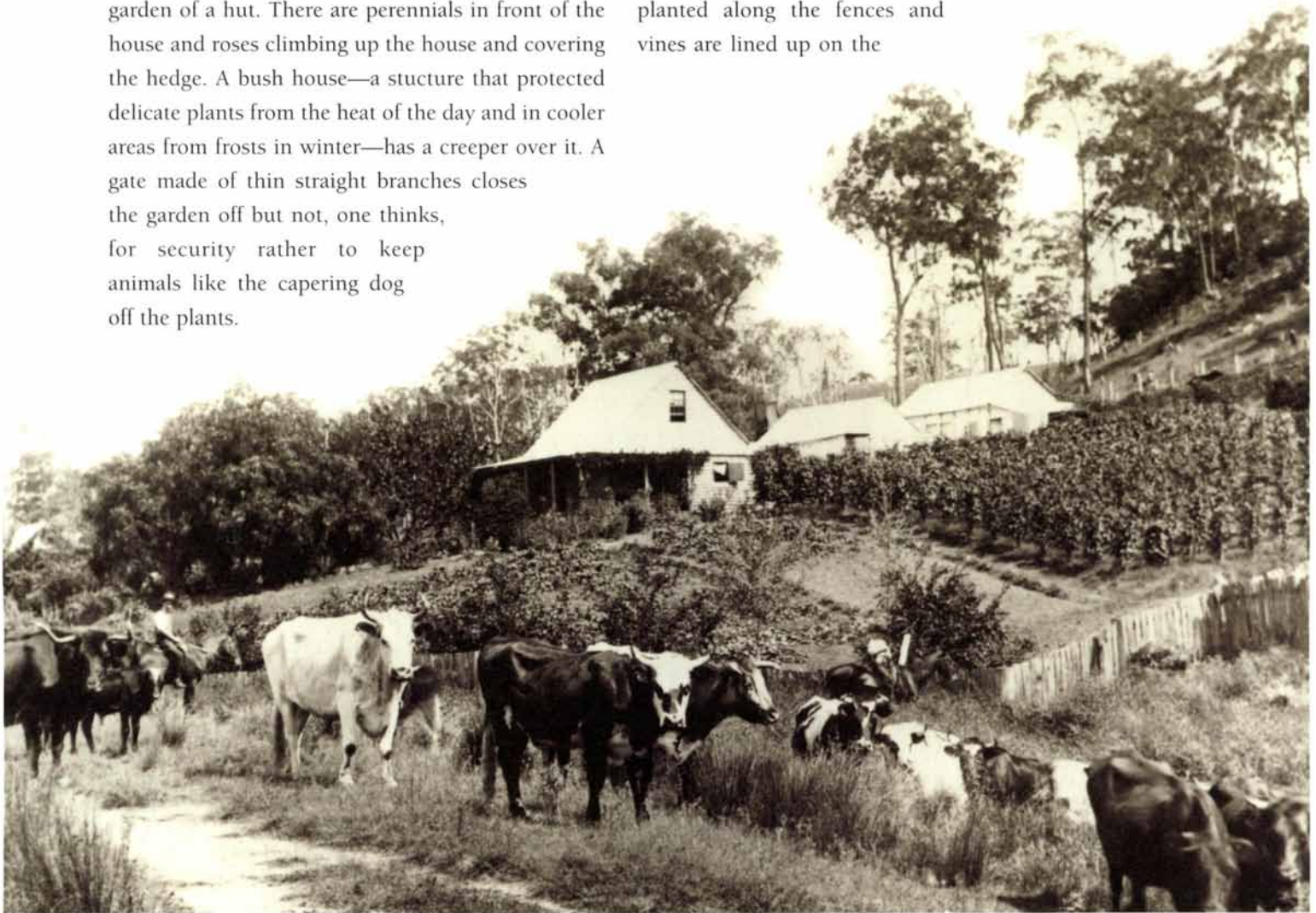


Back to Basics

with a pumpkin ramping through them surround a slab hut with a bark roof. Another of his photographs, called Rural Solitude, shows a substantial, if crooked, fence surrounding the fertile garden of a hut. There are perennials in front of the house and roses climbing up the house and covering the hedge. A bush house—a structure that protected delicate plants from the heat of the day and in cooler areas from frosts in winter—has a creeper over it. A gate made of thin straight branches closes the garden off but not, one thinks, for security rather to keep animals like the capering dog off the plants.

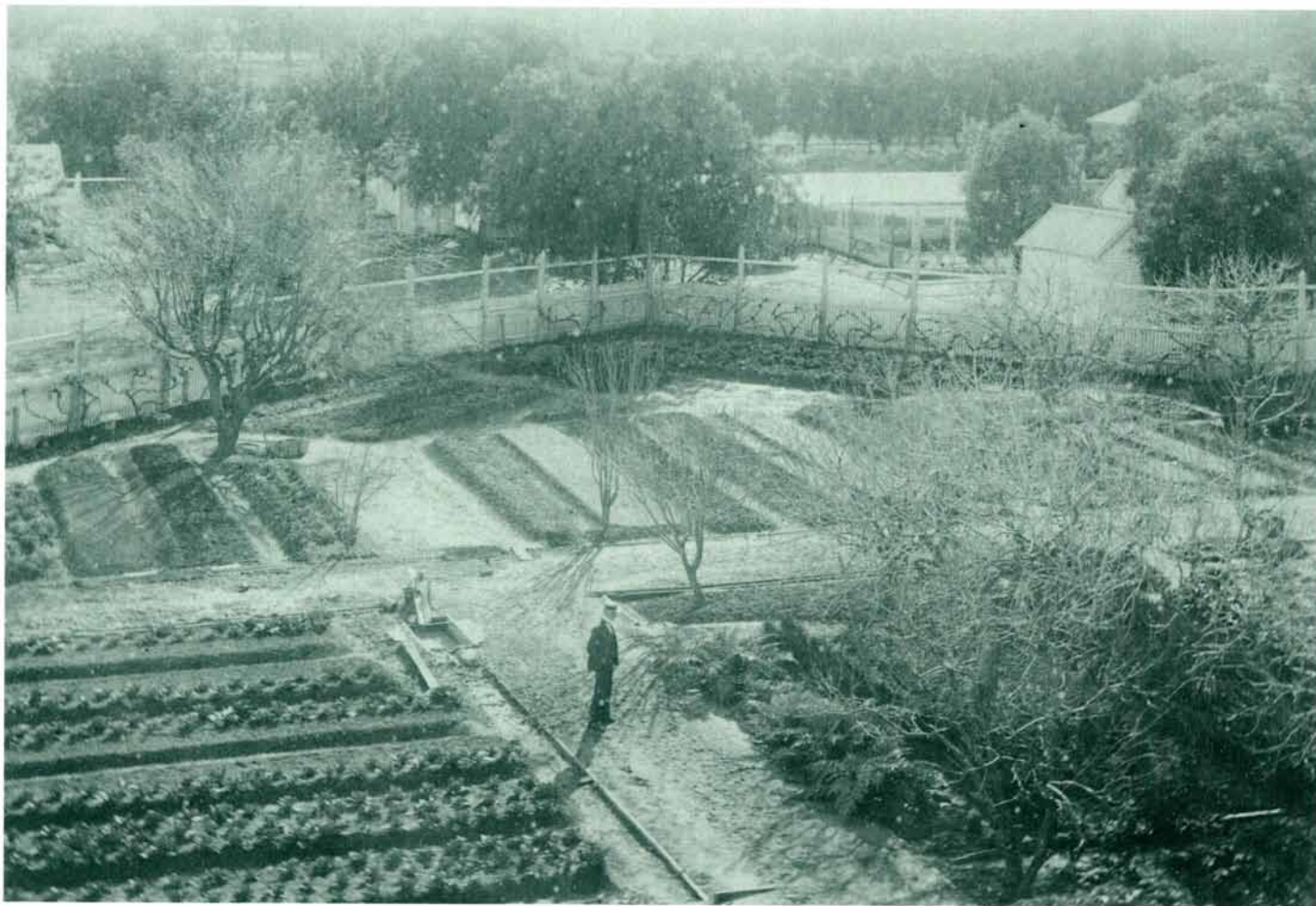
A homestead on the Cox River, which is much more prosperous, shows a substantial garden where eucalypts provide shelter, creepers cover the verandah and perennials surround it. Fruit trees are planted along the fences and vines are lined up on the

A productive rural garden
Cox River,
New South Wales
Tyrrell Collection; from
the Pictorial Collection



C H A P T E R 4

Back to Basics



A substantial vegetable
garden on a pastoral station
in the 1890s

Coonong,
New South Wales
Photograph by

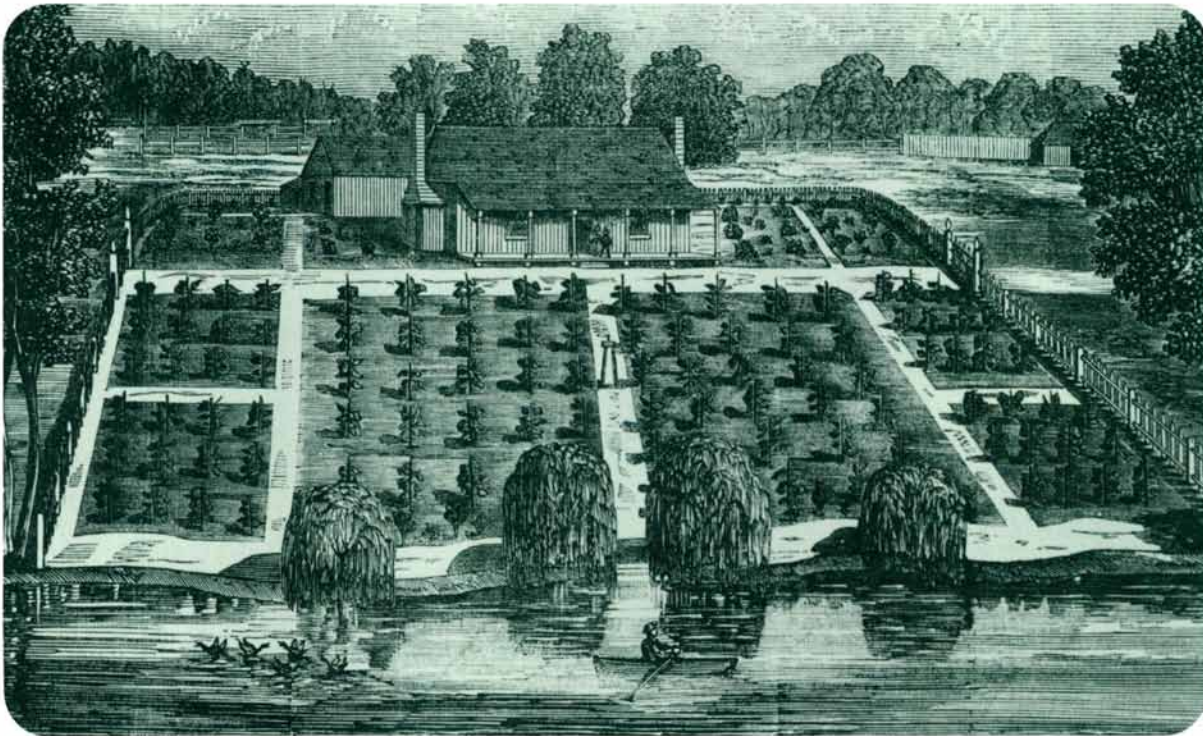
Sir Samuel McCaughey
S. McCaughey Collection;
from the Pictorial Collection

Back to Basics

slope facing the sun. Grassy swathes and cattle plodding past complete a contented picture.

The large vegetable garden at Coonong, a McCaughey property in New South Wales, shows a garden that probably provided food for many of its

workers. Grapes grow on the high and substantial fence, one which would keep out kangaroos. Fruit trees and vegetables, including globe artichokes, grow in well-ordered array. Gardeners would have been employed to tend this garden.



The head station of
Mr J. Balfe
Buddabuddah, Bogan
River, New South Wales
Reproduced from *Town
and Country Journal*,
1874
From the Pictorial
Collection



A neatly laid-out vegetable
garden in Hobart

H.J. Graham, 1858–1929
House and Garden, c.1884
watercolour; 10.2 x 20 cm
From the Pictorial Collection

Back to Basics

Buddabuddah, on the Bogan River on the western plains of New South Wales, is shown in the *Town and Country Journal* for 1874. On a different scale to Coonong, it is nevertheless a neatly laid-out garden with vegetables towards the back and staked plants in the front. It is hard to tell whether they are vines or young fruit trees. A broad path crosses in front of the house. Picket fences and slightly more important gates secure the area from stock. The river flowing at the bottom of the garden would not have been as easily managed. Reduced to a trickle or less in dry seasons and to a flood in wet seasons, it would have been an uneasy companion. Because of the erratic nature of rivers, many settlers built their houses on higher land and grew their vegetables away from the house on the river flats. This was particularly the case

with melons, which explains why wild melons can be found growing along many river courses today.

Harold Graham, who sketched many places in the eastern colonies in the 1880s, included a

view of his own vegetable garden in Hobart. Of a different scale to those on the great properties, it is a carefully tended vegetable garden with cabbages and fruit trees in the foreground of the fine view.

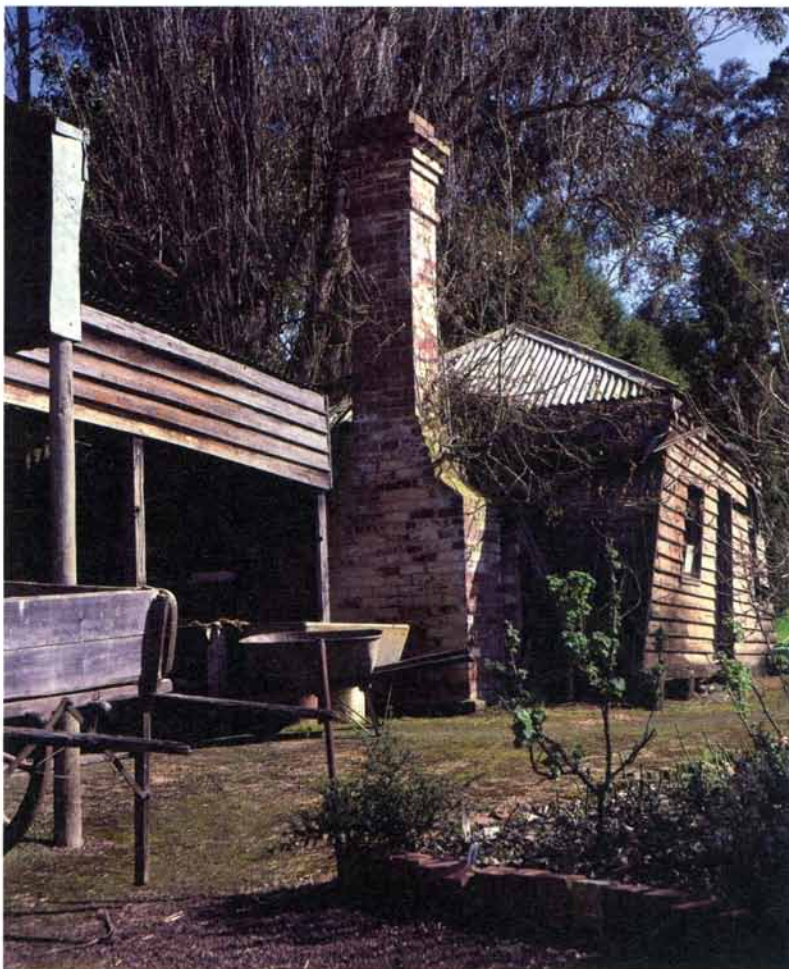


left
The gardener's companion, Sir Nicholas Salix, handcrafted from willow by sculptor Pam Scott

The Old Bibbenluke Inn, Monaro, New South Wales
Photograph by Trisha Dixon

far left
Decorative kitchen garden

Valleyfield, Epping Forest, Tasmania
Photograph by Trisha Dixon

Back to Basics

The growing number of productive, sustainable gardens today are not just a product of the back-to-the-earth movement, they are also descendants of these original cottage gardens. Indeed, just as was the case a century ago, many productive gardens with their herbs, vegetables and fruit trees are also gardens which are strikingly pretty.

Expansive country vegetable garden with antiquated wooden cottage once home to a Chinese vegetable gardener

Woolongoon, Morflake, Victoria
Photograph by Trisha Dixon

C H A P T E R 5
The Garden Designer



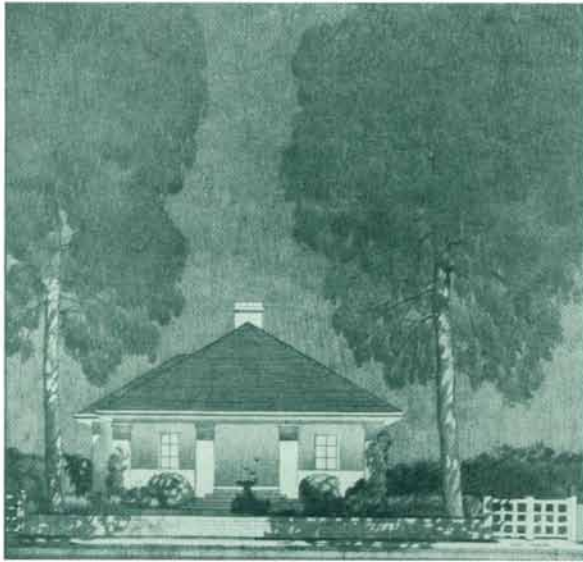
Edna Walling stonework
Bickleigh Vale, Mooroolbark, Victoria
Photograph by Trisha Dixon

C H A P T E R 5

The Garden Designer

far right
Landscaping
advertisement
featuring a drive
in the garden of a
Californian bungalow

Reproduced from
*The Garden and Home
Maker of Australia*,
September 1927



THE RESIDENCE OF JAMES C. PARKY, Esq., IN MELBOURNE

This is the original photograph of the residence 100 years ago when it was taken from a distance near the corner of Spring Street, Melbourne.

A plan of the residence is given in the book with details of the garden.

For the design and all other particulars of the garden.

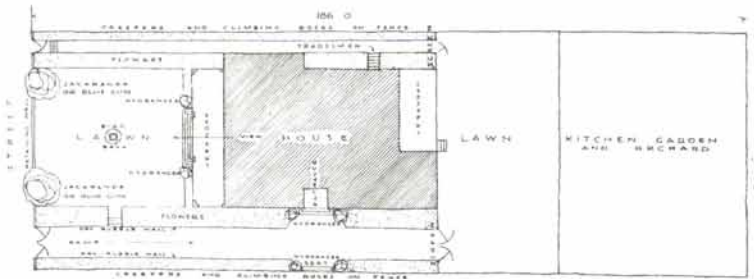
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right and below
John D. Moore's design
for a domestic garden
in the mid-war period

Reproduced from
The Home, June 1920



The beginning of the new century and the unification of the colonies into the federation of Australia was accompanied by an increase in the variety of house and garden styles. As cities extended and suburbs expanded, the quarter acre block remained the standard. Though the motor car was yet to exert its influence, the invention of the lawn-mower and the hose, toward the end of the nineteenth century, significantly affected gardens, making vast expanses of neatly trimmed grass possible for everyone.

The Garden Designer

While the gardenesque style continued into the new century, enhanced by the lawn which the lawnmower had made possible, elements of it were adapted into a new style which became known as the Federation garden. In this garden the front path curved and the garden beds were plainer but not geometric—anything but straight. Garden ornaments, including fountains, birdbaths, cement statues and ornamental balustrades were featured and annuals with their bright colours came into prominence.

The geometric style also persisted. John D. Moore's design for a small garden reflected the preference of many households: the front garden is decorative although symmetrical and based on

straight lines; the paths do not divide the lawn; one path runs down the side of the house to the tradesman's entrance, the back door; and the other path, wide enough for a car, leads to the main entrance on the other side of the house. Side entrances were in vogue for a while. On Moore's plan, the house was to be framed by jacarandas (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*) or blue gums (*Eucalyptus saligna*), both very large trees. Hydrangeas and flower beds lined both sides of the lawn and the paths. At the back, a lawn provided a recreation area and beyond it lay a kitchen garden and orchard.

Lloyd Rees drew an ideal house and garden of the 1920s in his engraving for the masthead of *The Home; an Australian Quarterly* which aimed to

The Garden Designer

introduce 'the best' in design. Again, trees frame the house. A curved path leads to the front door. Plants tumble over a low stone wall, separating the garden from the street, and climb up to the windows. The house is on show. There is no barrier such as a fence or hedge to obscure the view of passers-by. The front garden is not a useful garden like the cottage garden where the productive and the decorative mingle.

The bungalow garden of the 1920s was above all a garden featuring lawns. Couch or buffalo grass surrounded the house and typical plantings included wattle, cypress, jacaranda (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*) and citrus such as lemon, mandarin, orange and lime. Clipped privet hedges were also fashionable.

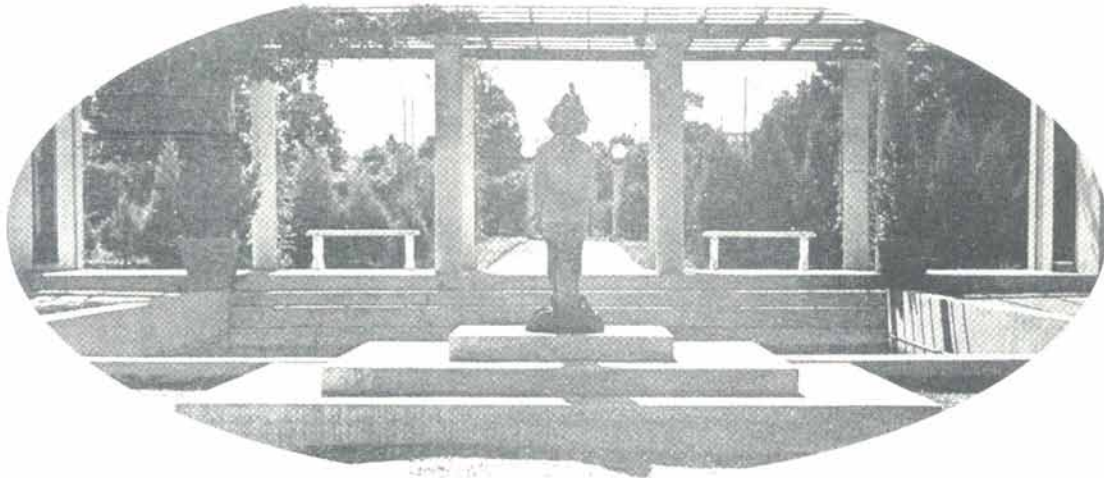
Roses became very popular about this time and their appeal has not waned

since, though different types of roses come in and out of fashion. In many gardens, roses, particularly the bush tea roses, replaced the beds of annuals and other massed colourful plants. Rose-swathed pergolas and trellises and rose hedges became fashionable. The pink and red radiance roses, 'the best of the utility roses' were highly recommended, as were white Maman Cochet and yellow Safrano among others.

Another style which came back into fashion was the formal style. Coombe Cottage, Dame Nellie Melba's home in Melbourne, shows the formal, or classical influence, in her pool and terrace.

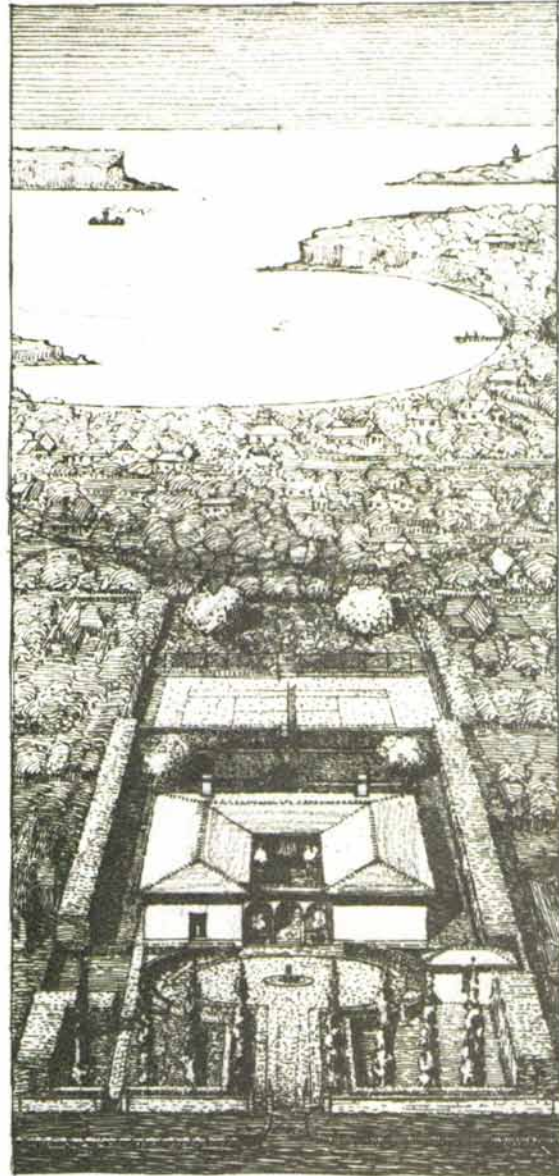
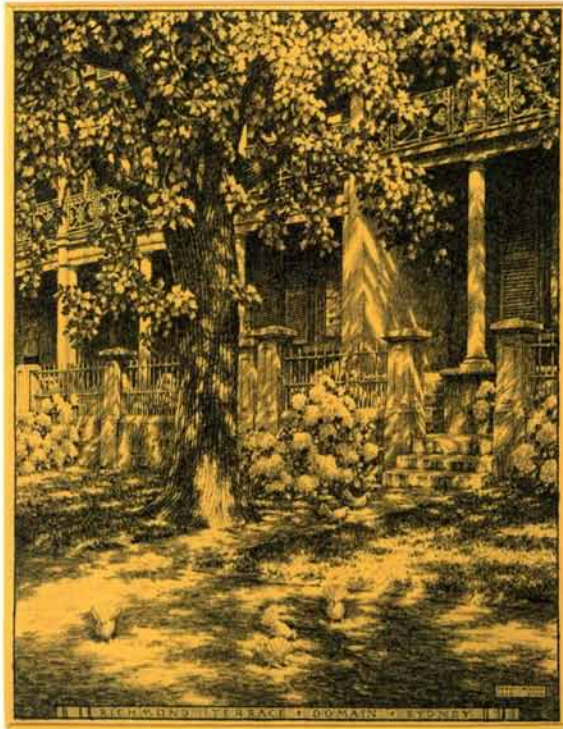
In 1920 William Hardy Wilson, the architect and designer, drew a plan of a garden for the Ideal Australian Home Competition.

A swimming pool in
the formal garden of
Dame Nellie Melba's
Coombe Cottage
Reproduced from
The Home,
February 1920



The Garden Designer

The front garden is classical Roman. The entrance is a straight path to a circular terrace which is built around an atrium, as in Roman houses. On either side of the path and terrace are stiff lines of cypress.



left
An ideal house and garden designed by Hardy Wilson. There is a mix of Roman and Australian elements in his design
Reproduced courtesy of Dr L. Hardy Wilson

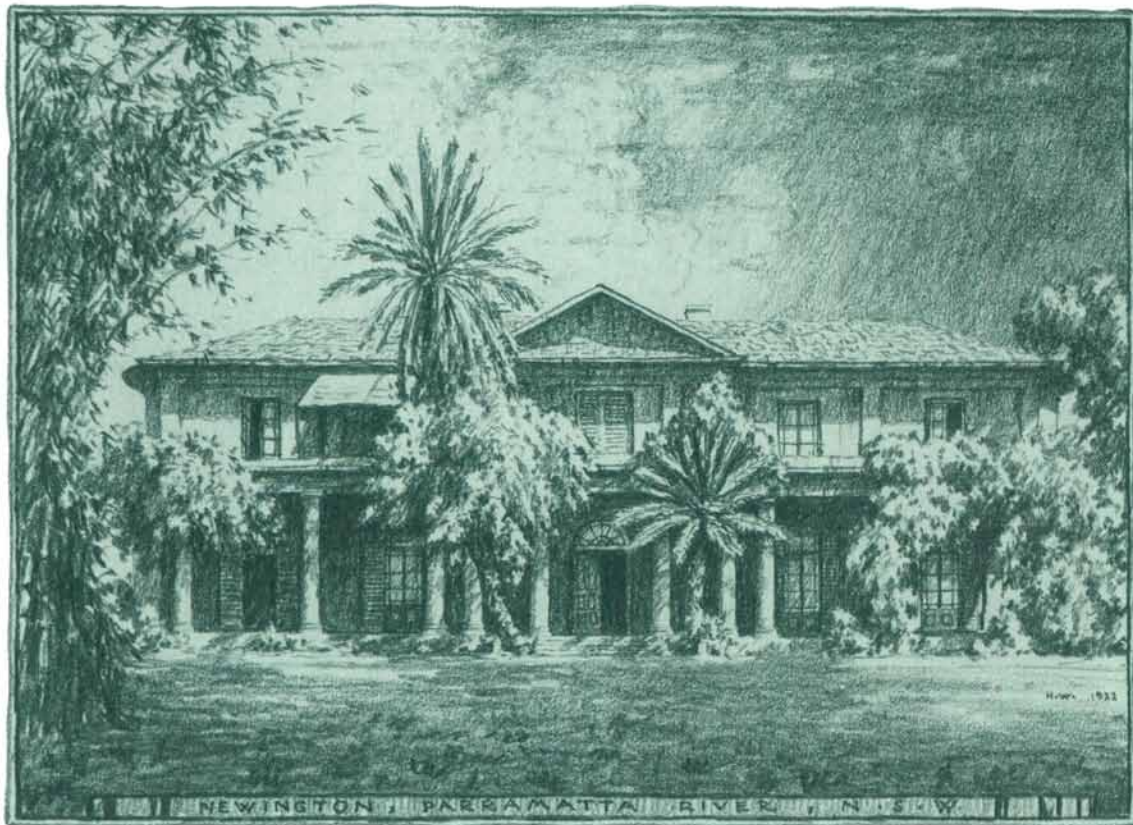
far left
An idealised view of the front garden of a terrace house in Sydney
Hardy Wilson, 1881-1955
Richmond Terrace, Domain, Sydney, 1920
pencil: 45 x 35.1 cm
From the Pictorial Collection

C H A P T E R 5

The Garden Designer

Palms provide an architectural element in this garden on the Parramatta River

Hardy Wilson, 1881–1955
Newington, Parramatta River, NSW, 1916
pencil; 45.5 x 54.3 cm
From the Pictorial Collection



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Straight trimmed hedges outline the path and the side tradesman's entrance. The circle of the terrace is repeated by a circular pool to one side. There is a terrace at the back of the house which overlooks a tennis court. Behind the tennis court is a wilderness area which might have been intended as an orchard and vegetable garden. This charming eclecticism is superimposed on a sketch of Sydney and its harbour.

Wilson's drawing of Newington, on the Parramatta River, shows foundation planting along the verandah rather in the American style. This is a lush planting in a formal style, slightly marred by one of a pair of palms having outgrown the other—a common problem for gardeners. The garden is rich in palms and bamboos set off by swathes of grass.

The American influence, which had been growing since the late 1800s, received an impetus from newspapers and magazines. But the dominant American influence came through films emanating from Hollywood. Harold Cazneau's photograph of Shadowood, in Bowral, shows a south-west American influence in both the house and the courtyard. Crazy paving and a central pool make an open entrance courtyard. The cement-rendered walls



are offset by foundation plantings and fastigate cypress, which make dramatic accents against the pale walls.

From the beginning, Australian gardens featured a mix of native and exotic, or introduced, plants but during the early years of the twentieth century the idea of creating gardens solely of native plants gained appeal. Amy Mack, who published several popular books on the bush and wrote in the *Sydney Morning*

The south-west American style is evident in both the house and courtyard of Shadowood, Bowral

Photograph by Harold Cazneau
From the Pictorial Collection

The Garden Designer

Herald, was one of those who urged an appreciation of indigenous plants. In 1920 she published an account of one of the largest native and exotic gardens in Sydney, Tregoyd at Balmoral, which had been established in the 1890s.

Mack's account was published in the December edition of *The Home*, one of the journals encouraging the use of native plants. The same edition of the magazine featured Bilgoela, a seaside house with a large garden where the spectacular cabbage tree palms (*Livistona australis*) add drama to the scene.

right
Courtyard garden

Photograph by Harold
Cazneaux
From the Pictorial
Collection

below
Cabbage tree palms
(*Livistona australis*)
photographed by
Harold Cazneaux

Bilgoela,
New South Wales
Reproduced from
The Home,
December 1920



The Garden Designer

FIG. 19.042

THE AUSTRALIAN GARDEN AT "TREGOYD"



The paved drive, the lawn, the path, the garden of the house at Tregoyd, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, 1920.



The garden at Tregoyd, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, 1920.



The garden at Tregoyd, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, 1920.



The garden at Tregoyd, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, 1920.

FIG. 19.043

They line the drive and are set off by the lawns. Exotics are clearly established around the house. The geraniums (*Pelargonium* spp.) are from cuttings from

Government House, Sydney. One wonders, perhaps, if the original source were Surgeon Bowes Smyth's geraniums which he brought with him on the First Fleet. Bilgoela is one garden where exotics and indigenous plants mixed to great effect.

Charles Weston, who planned the early plantings in Canberra, and Walter Burley Griffin, who designed the city, were also advocates of native plants and their concept of the city beautiful, the garden city, encompassed a desire to use native trees.

Another magazine, *The Gardener and Home Maker of Australia*, also strongly encouraged the use of native trees and shrubs. It published a series of Aboriginal stories about Australian plants, articles about gardens featuring native plants, and lists of native plants for the various seasons and for different uses.

Several descriptions of gardens in Sydney in *The Garden and the Home* magazine are evidence of the way native plants and exotics were mixed in gardens of the time. The journal described Lorne at Killara in its November 1923 issue, with its eucalypts and elk horns (*Platyserium bifercatum*) clinging to its trees. There were other native flora,

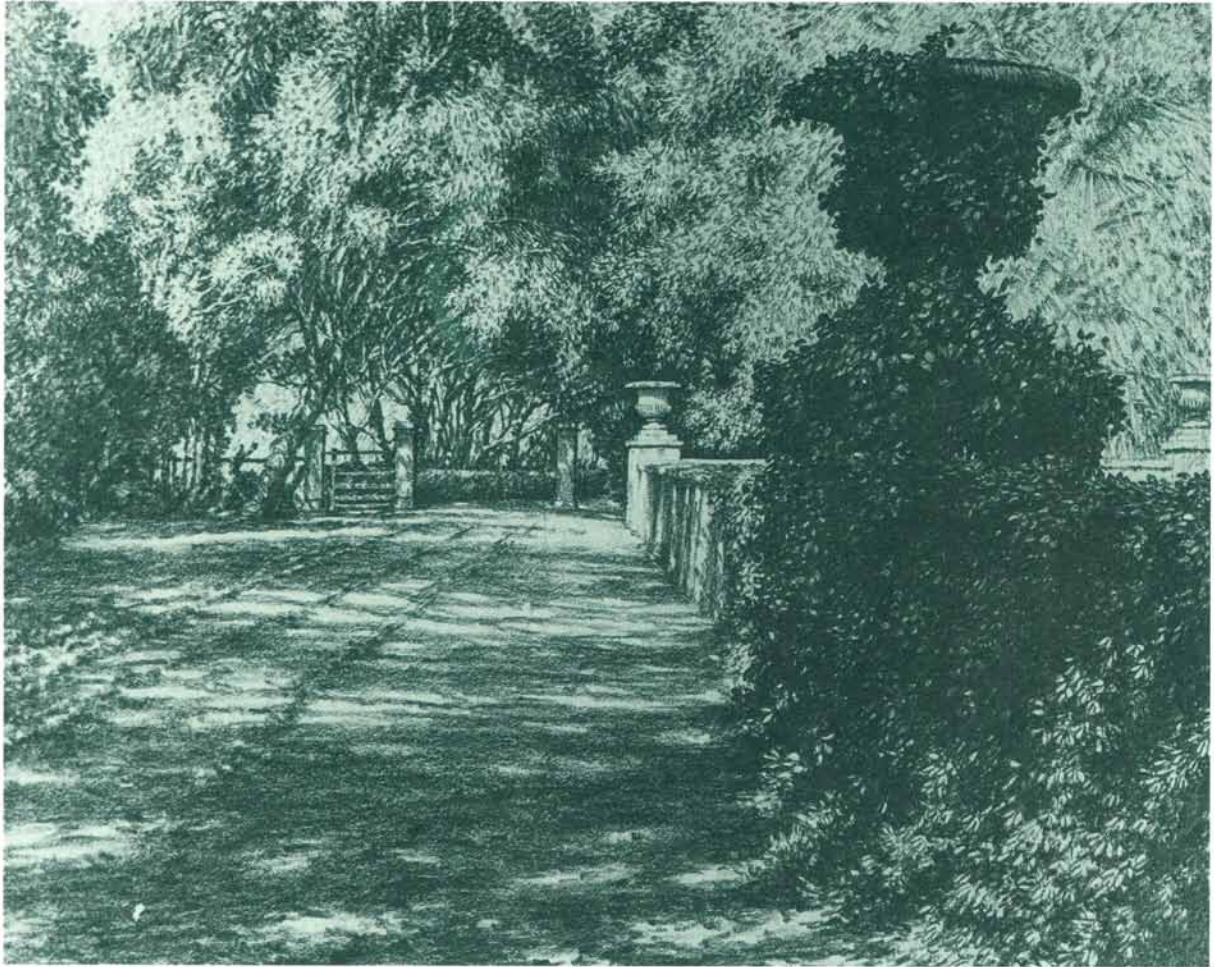
Amy Mack's description and photographs of the Australian garden started in the 1890s at Tregoyd overlooking Balmoral Beach on Sydney Harbour. Reproduced from *The Home*, December 1920.

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The Brownlow Hill garden is one of Australia's finest examples of the gardenesque style

Hardy Wilson, 1881–1955
Detail from *Entrance to Brownlow Hill, Camden, NSW*, 1919
pencil; 45.4 x 54.9 cm
From the Pictorial Collection



The Garden Designer

yellow pea (*Epacris longiflora*), native ferns and the rock lily (*Dendrobium* spp.). It also had daisies, forget-me-nots, nerines and *Clivia nobilis*. There was a vegetable garden to one side and an orchard at the back. It had a celebrated rose garden with borders of violets.

Another remarkable garden to feature in *The Garden and the Home* magazine in 1923 was Frikfort at Marrickville in Sydney. It had roses all the way to the house and a hedge of pink roses and a giant Moreton Bay fig (*Ficus macrophylla*) with a host of stag horns (*Platycerium superbum*) hanging from it. It had a lawn under an English oak (*Quercus robur*), a rustic seat under an Irish strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*), a stately blueberry ash (*Elaeocarpus reticulatus*) and camellias, including the tea tree (*Camellia sinensis*). The reporter from the magazine observed that nature had run riot with:

a beautiful medley of plants, a white bride rose beside a fleshy desert plant from Africa, a flat Japanese rose near an American chestnut, a fantastic cape strelitzia not far from a golden laburnum, northern and

Norfolk Island pines, a kauri pine (whether Australian or New Zealand is not clear), a silky oak (*Grevillea robusta*), the beautiful red-flowering Illawarra flame tree from just south of Sydney (*Brachychiton acerifolius*) and much else.

The Garden and the Home for January 1924 described another garden, Hervile at Killara, a suburb of Sydney, as having standard roses along a red gravel drive, under-planted with ground covers. It had many species of magnolias and maples, and the Australian bunya-bunya pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*). Also featured were: daphne, many jasmines and syringa, rhododendrons, azaleas and hydrangeas, the Australian climber *Hardenbergia violacea* and the exotic *Antignon* spp., bougainvillea and clematis.

Strathfield, the home of Joseph Vickery, another outstanding garden of the period, was described in *The Garden and the Home* for February 1924. It had eucalypts, camphor trees (*Cinnamomum camphora*), many prunus, jacarandas (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*), mandarins, olives, the bunya-bunya pine and silky

Country garden design
in the Walling style
Markdale, Binda,
New South Wales
Photograph by
Trisha Dixon



oaks. The serpentine gravelled drive was edged with turf and lined with Orleans roses. Behind them were poles for dahlias and chrysanthemums. There was a *Mina lobata* along the tennis-court fence covering a

hundred feet of fence and a wonga-wonga vine (*Pandora pandorana*). The spiky New Zealand flax (*Phormium tenax*), *Euphorbia splendens* and the sacred bamboo (*Nandina domestica*), bananas

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(*Musa* spp.), *Dracaena* species, and *Agave americana* mingled with the Chinese fan palm (*Livistona chinensis*) and the Canary date palm (*Phoenix canariensis*). The Australian boronia, Christmas bush (*Ceratopetalum gummiferum*), the flame pea (*Chorizema* spp.), Geraldton wax (*Chamelaucium uncinatum*), Didiscus (*Trachymene coerulea*) and *Stenocarpus cunninghamii* indicate the range of Australian plants, many from across the continent, that were available to



gardeners in Sydney. Varieties of roses included Comtesse de Cayla, American pillar, climbing Orleans, Dorothy Perkins and Hiawatha. And there was much, much more. The reporter called this a natural garden!

These detailed descriptions show the extent to which Australian plants were appreciated well before the native garden movement of the later years of the twentieth century; and that they were planted in joyous riot with exotic plants from all over the world.

The history of gardening in Australia has not till recently been marked by many Australian garden designers of wide repute. Guilfoyle in the nineteenth century was one. Three others stand out in the early to mid-twentieth century: Edna Walling, Jocelyn Brown and Paul Sorensen.

Edna Walling was born in England and came to Australia with her family in 1912 when she was sixteen. She entered Burnley Agricultural College in Melbourne in 1916 and after graduating became a gardening labourer. Two years later she became inspired by 'a stone wall supporting a semi-circular terrace; I was fascinated ... I shall build walls, I found myself solemnly registering'. She turned to design, creating formal designs for others while establishing a small garden and bushland around her own cottage. In the 1920s she bought a tract of land on the outskirts of Melbourne and created a village called Bickleigh Vale,

Edna Walling believed this garden to be her finest creation
Mawarra, Sherbrooke, Victoria
Photograph by Trisha Dixon



Entrance to an
Edna Walling
walled garden
Cruden Farm,
Langwarrin, Victoria
Photograph by
Trisha Dixon

where she lived for many years. Seventy years later the gardens still reflect her influence.

Walling melded the influence of Gertrude Jekyll and William Robinson, both English garden designers, with her own attraction for Australian native plants. Jekyll worked with the architect of New Delhi, Edwin Lutyens, designing gardens in the new tradition of the Arts and Crafts Movement. The strong architecture of

Lutyens combined with the artistic and colourful plantings of Jekyll became their trademark. Jekyll was also influenced by Robinson, the writer of *The Wild Garden*, published in 1870 and the owner/editor of the English journal *The Garden* which extolled the beauty of English wildflowers and 'rustic' decoration in the garden. Robinson reacted against the gardenesque and Victorian stylised and exotic gardening. Interestingly, both Jekyll and Robinson are directly influencing today's gardeners

through the republication of their writings and their outspoken disciples.

Walling's work ranged from simple cottage gardens to more sophisticated gardens for large houses in the cities, in the hills outside the main cities, and on pastoral properties. A solid underlying framework, including her much-loved stone walls, terraces and steps, was softened by exuberant plantings.

She wrote regularly in the *Australian Home Beautiful* for twenty years, as well as writing five enormously successful books, one of which was published posthumously. Here she describes her particular love of the Australian landscape and native plants:

How pleasant a light is thrown upon the subject of making new gardens from a study of those we have been looking at in the mountains and other wild places. How important the topography is. How vital every boulder providing a sheltered pocket, or holding back some steep bank. There never seems to be any spare earth in these gardens of Nature's making.



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In 1967, as suburbia encroached on Bickleigh Vale, she moved to Buderim in Queensland, where she started another garden which was to reflect a change in her thinking. 'This garden of mine is not going to be a fashionable one of native plants, much as I love natives. My garden will be stuffed full of as many of the old-world flowers as I can find that will thrive happily in this rather humid climate.' Unfortunately, poor health prevented her from seeing this garden grow into maturity.

Jocelyn Brown, a Sydney garden designer, came into prominence in the 1930s and 1940s. She married an architect, Alfred Brown, and they spent time in England after the First World War, living in Welwyn Garden City where Alfred worked for the city architect. The Garden City Movement was influential on both of them as was the Arts and Crafts Movement. The legacy of Gertrude Jekyll shaped Jocelyn's judgement. She enjoyed mixing the symmetrical and the asymmetrical and over-planting for a lavish effect. Regrettably, many of her gardens have not survived but her work is gaining recognition again through books and articles written about her.

Paul Sorensen was born in Denmark in 1890. He arrived in Australia in 1915 after studying horticulture in Denmark and working for a Copenhagen nursery and at the Villa Hvidore, the summer home of the Queen of Denmark. The First World War and one of the worst droughts in recorded time meant there was little employment, especially for a gardener, so he went to work on a property as a general hand and grower of vegetables. The drought and the fierce dust led him to advise

Jocelyn Brown's
Sydney home
Greenwood, St Ives,
New South Wales
Photograph by
Trisha Dixon



C H A P T E R 5

The Garden Designer



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people later: 'In Australia don't buy land, buy water.' The experience gave him a chance to absorb some feeling for the Australian flora, and when he began designing, he did not ignore native plants. Instead he mixed his palette, choosing the plant appropriate for what he wanted it to do. The gardens he is most associated with are the larger gardens of the Blue Mountains and the Western Plains of New South Wales although he also designed a number of small, urban gardens.

Paul Sorensen's
landscape of sweeping
lawns and mature trees
Invergowrie, Exeter,
New South Wales
Photograph by
Trisha Dixon

Sorensen was influenced not by Robinson and Jekyll, but by a European interpretation of Capability Brown and Humphrey Repton through his own teachers and first employers in Copenhagen. He was interested in spaces and in large plants. Trees



were the most significant element in his design. In his gardens, the mature effects are the lovely contrast and melding of foliage of all types offset by wide lawns. His nursery in the Blue Mountains is planted with trees which make it more like a garden than the average nursery.

He died at Leura in the Blue Mountains in 1983, working till the end of his life. Unlike Edna Walling he did not write. His work is remembered through gardens like Everglades, Fjellheim II, Blue Mist and Cheppen and more recently through Richard Ratcliffe's writings and lectures.

The contributions of these three people—Walling, Brown and Sorensen—spanned the middle of the century, and the work of Walling and Sorensen continues to influence the gardens of today.

C H A P T E R 6
An Evolution



The portable garden
Photograph by Trisha Dixon

An Evolution

Since the 1960s the range of Australian garden styles has continued to grow, influenced by the increasing mobility of Australians, the influx of migrants, television programs, films and the masses of gardening books and magazines.

A decorative interpretation of the English cottage garden, with an emphasis on English plants such as bluebells and hyacinths, night-scented stocks, old fashioned roses, pinks, iris and columbine, has become very fashionable. This fashion represents a

romantic, idealised view of the original cottage garden because, in most cases, the latter's very practical and productive nature is overlooked. In the decorative English cottage garden of today any utilitarian aspects are usually concealed and there is not a strong emphasis on the production of food.

While Australian plants do not feature strongly in these gardens, there is a push by nurseries and some publications to include those Australian plants that lend themselves to the cottage garden design. Larger Australian plants which were already in the garden, like eucalypts, may be left to give an Australian flavour.

Another style of garden which is enjoying a resurgence is the larger, more formal garden, often described as an English garden. While it never disappeared, at least in the cooler, high-rainfall areas, such as Victoria and Tasmania and the tablelands and highlands of New South Wales, it has been particularly celebrated in recent times through the garden visiting movement. Most are recognisably Australian because of the borrowed landscapes of paddocks and the grey-green of the eucalypts, wattles and other native shrubs. While English

Creative use of a
'backyard'

Rose Cottage,
Beechworth, Victoria
Photograph by
Trisha Dixon



An Evolution

gardens generally merge into the English landscape, there is a perceptible division between the garden and the landscape in the Australian version. This is not unattractive, but it is different; the grey-green colours together with the strong Australian light, even in winter, emphasise that difference.

Formal gardens are having a strong revival and topiary, or shaped plants, are once again in vogue. This may be a reaction to the denseness of some native gardens or the blowzy lushness of the cottage garden, or simply the result of television and book publishing influences.

The native garden movement that began in the 1890s exploded in the 1950s and 1960s and then suffered a decline in popularity in the 1980s as many gardens became overgrown, untidy and lanky. It was a fairly common, but uninformed, belief that the native garden was a trouble-free or low-maintenance garden. At that time, horticultural knowledge lagged behind the enthusiasm for all-native gardens which, in fact, needed careful tending and pruning. Some plants died out or became unhealthy in the artificial environment; trees described as small grew too large for suburban gardens as they enjoyed the

unaccustomed increase in water; and the larger plants gradually took over from the smaller ones. The ecologist Professor Nix observed that his own garden changed from a heath-like garden to a forest-like environment in only two decades.

The streetscapes of Aranda, a Canberra suburb built on the slopes of Black Mountain at the height of the native garden movement in the late 1950s and 1960s, reveal the triumphs and failures of the native garden. The best gardens are lovely backgrounds for

Suburban garden
blending exotic and
indigenous plants
Dimple garden, Farrer,
Australian Capital
Territory
Photograph by
Trisha Dixon



An Evolution

family life. Others demonstrate the problems of believing that native gardens are low-maintenance gardens.

In the 1990s there has been a change in native gardens. No longer purely native, they now include some exotics. The Dimpel garden, in the arid Canberra suburb of Farrer, is an example of this. While it was intended to contain only Australian plants, Mrs Dimpel's love of plants she knew in Germany has led to a successful blending of native and exotic. The front garden is almost entirely native and the side and back gardens have a mix. Mr Dimpel has 'borrowed' some of the tiny reserve at

Where once there were gardeners to keep some semblance of order, judicious neglect has resulted in a more relaxed style of country garden

Bobundara, Monaro, New South Wales
Photograph by Trisha Dixon

Percy F.S. Spence
Bobundara, an Early Australian Homestead

Reproduced from
Australia (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1910)



An Evolution

one side and the Farrer Ridge reserve at the back to create a landscape which makes the surrounding suburb seem miles away. Lawns are used sparingly: they sweep up from the drive to make a path to the side of the house and set off a lovely group of eucalypts on a rise, a small pool near the dining room, and the flowery beds rising up the slope. Elsewhere the paths are mulched for walking.

Another native garden, in Melbourne, is a cross between two styles: it is a native garden but instead of a bush setting it has strong architectural lines and a formal structure. Low water use is a priority. Created by Chapman and Faulkner Landscape Design, the garden repeats the lines of the house and is designed to bring a view of the

Dandenongs into the garden. Native and exotic are successfully combined because they were chosen for their similar water requirements. The natives receive an equal amount of treatment and in fact some are shaped. The hardy *Westringia* spp. has, for example, been successfully clipped into topiary forms. This shrub, found from Tasmania to Queensland, with its grey-green colouring, its delicate white or pale violet coloured flowers which appear in winter, its hardiness against heat, cold and the salty blast of sea winds and



above
Trompe l'oeil effect creates understated elegance in the front entrance to a suburban home

Berger garden, Forrest, Australian Capital Territory
Photograph by Trisha Dixon



left
Merging of nature strip and garden

Maggie Shepherd garden, Red Hill, Australian Capital Territory
Photograph by Trisha Dixon

far left
Australian topiary: *Westringia* is clipped into a dense ball
Photograph courtesy of *Landscape Australia* magazine



An Evolution

Garden design adapted
to harsh environment
Seddon garden,
Fremantle, Western
Australia
Photograph by
Ralph Neale



its tolerance of pruning, has become one of the most versatile of Australian plants.

The battle against harsh conditions is continuous in many gardens and Professor George Seddon, landscape architect, philosopher and writer, has described how he and his wife cope with the difficult conditions of their fifth garden in Fremantle,

Western Australia. The garden is exposed to strong salt-laden winds coming off the Indian Ocean and is on a fine white calcareous sand which repels water and contains little organic matter. The rain falls mainly in winter with none at all from November to March when the heat dries out everything. His solution is drought-tolerant plants and paving. He could not develop a native garden to match his house and other buildings from last century because most Australian plants will not tolerate alkaline soils. Taking his own best advice, he prowled the nearby gardens to see what was growing. Mediterranean plants have been the answer, as they are in many gardens. *Artemisia*, lavender, oleander and oaks from the Mediterranean (*Cork Oak*, *Quercus suber*, the Italian Evergreen Oak, *Quercus ilex* and the Algerian Oak, *Quercus canariensis*). Professor Seddon struck cuttings from single-flowered oleanders from the local cemetery when he could not find the colours he wanted in nurseries. African plants have also found a place, particularly 'good old agapanthus'. The Swan River cypress (*Actinostrobus pyramidalis*) and *Bauhinia hookeri* with its crimson-edged



flowers are two Australian trees that thrive in this difficult environment.

The nature strip is a significant element in the modern streetscape and it is seen at its best in the

national capital. Designed as a garden city, Canberra incorporates nature strips along many of its streets. Most consist of native or exotic trees with a plain lawn underneath in the American style. Increasingly,

Elegance of the white trunks of eucalypts along one of Canberra's most stately streets (*Eucalyptus mannifera* spp. *maculosa*)

Mugga Way, Red Hill, Australian Capital Territory
Photograph by Trisha Dixon

An Evolution

The illusion of country in the city with the use of natural landscape elements such as winding gravel drive, towering eucalypts and mass plantings of agapanthus

Bickleigh Vale,
Mooroolbark, Victoria
Photograph by
Trisha Dixon



however, gardeners are decorating their nature strips with dense plantings of natives or exotics and incorporating the nature strip into the design of their front gardens. Other gardeners faced with extra grass to mow and water abandon the grass and plant low-maintenance creepers over the area.

Quite commonly in suburban gardens the drive has become the path to the house as well. This has caused a decline in that long-popular feature, the front garden divided symmetrically in two by a central path to the front door. Now the drive serves both purposes with a small path leading off it to the front door. The concrete driveway of the 1950s and 1960s is being replaced by attractive paving and elegant plantings. So too, the garage, with its dominating appearance, is being replaced by the carport. The Dimpel's drive is more like a wide path. It winds past the garages on the side of the house with central plantings to break up the expanse of turning circle, to the kitchen and a carport at the back. It is beautifully paved and rhododendrons, perennial phlox, *Lomandra longifolia* and many other plants tumble over the edges. The carport is a place for shade in summer and hanging baskets are filled with more tender plants.

An Evolution

Though the quarter acre block endures, the trend, particularly in the inner suburbs, is toward medium-density living, creating a series of new challenges for Australian gardeners. One consequence has been the popularity of the courtyard garden. Paul Sheppard's design for a cluster of townhouses in Melbourne provides an outstanding example of the Japanese influence. The Xanthorrhoea Garden is the entrance courtyard of one of the houses. It has a very limited number of



far left
Five Virtues Courtyard
Garden designed by
Paul Sheppard
Melbourne, Victoria
Photograph courtesy of
Landscape Australia
magazine

left
The sense of enclosure
is a strong element in
garden design
Hanaminno, Boorowa,
New South Wales
Photograph by
Trisha Dixon

Informal planting
surrounds an
expanse of water in
a country garden

Longfield, Robertson,
New South Wales
Photograph by
Trisha Dixon



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plants with a grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea australis*) facing the entrance gate. The Bamboo Screen Courtyard has screens supporting climbers such as clematis and the verandahs are of bamboo. The Five Virtues Courtyard Garden, the five Confucian



virtues, is a more densely planted garden. The Teahouse Style Garden is a sparsely planted garden, designed to show the serenity of plants and space.

An atrium of a house in Melbourne, designed by Ivan Stranger, has classical references but it is entirely modern in its planting. The enclosure and light from a glass roof allows a tropical garden to grow in a cool climate. The lushness and the sound of the waterfall soothe the senses. Plants are a mix of native and exotic such as *Spathiphyllum phrynifolium*, *Dracaena marginata* and *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*, the Bangalow palm. Baby's tears (*Helxine solierolii*) is planted along the stream.

In a space of half an acre, Polly Park has designed a remarkable garden in Canberra. She has created a classic American front garden, a classical Italian parterre, a knot garden, an Indian garden, a modern classical garden inspired by the Brazilian designer



left and above
Broad-leaved plants provide the middle level of the canopy and palms provide the upper storey in an atrium designed by Ivan Stranger
Toorak, Victoria
Photographs courtesy of *Landscape Australia* magazine

An Evolution

right Burle Marx, as well as other gardens. Each of these is complete and in a 'room' of its own, except for the miniature garden and knot garden. Many visitors come to this garden: some study it, others meditate in the Japanese garden, but all enjoy it.

The idiosyncratic garden has probably been with us since gardening began. Producing something other than the plant garden is a labour of love for some people who also produce the most amazing effects to stun passers-by. The reasons they are made are as various as people's interests. In Griffith, a

suburb of Canberra, there is a garden commemorating the people of Oradour sur Glane in France who were massacred in the Second World War. It has been made by an RAF rear gunner who, after being shot down, was looked after by the people of this village. The garden is a garden of memories, telling the story to those who might otherwise not hear it.

right
Garden to commemorate the village of Oradour sur Glane in France

Griffith garden, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory
Photograph by Trisha Dixon

below
American-style front garden with clipped box hedges and immaculate lawn
Boxford, Red Hill, Australian Capital Territory
Photograph by Trisha Dixon



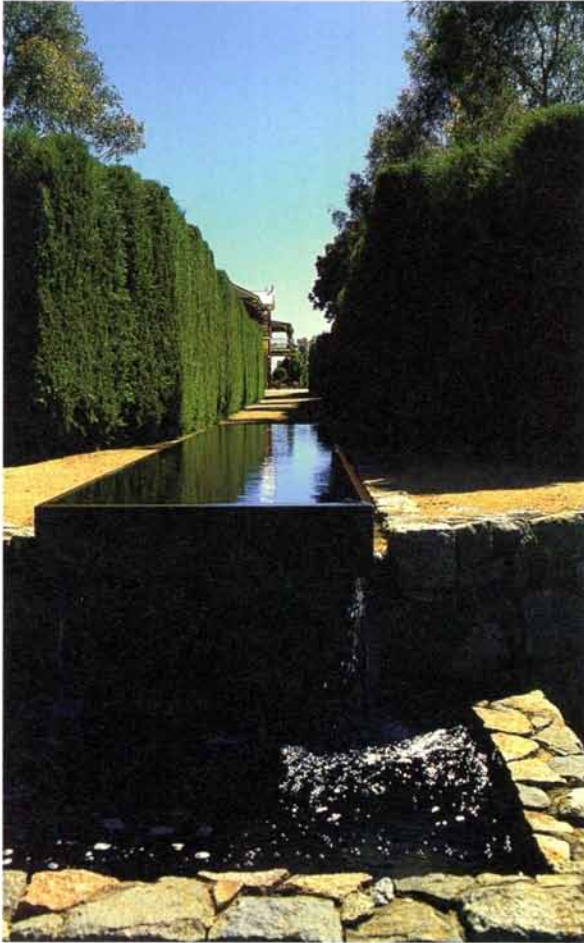
An Evolution



An Evolution

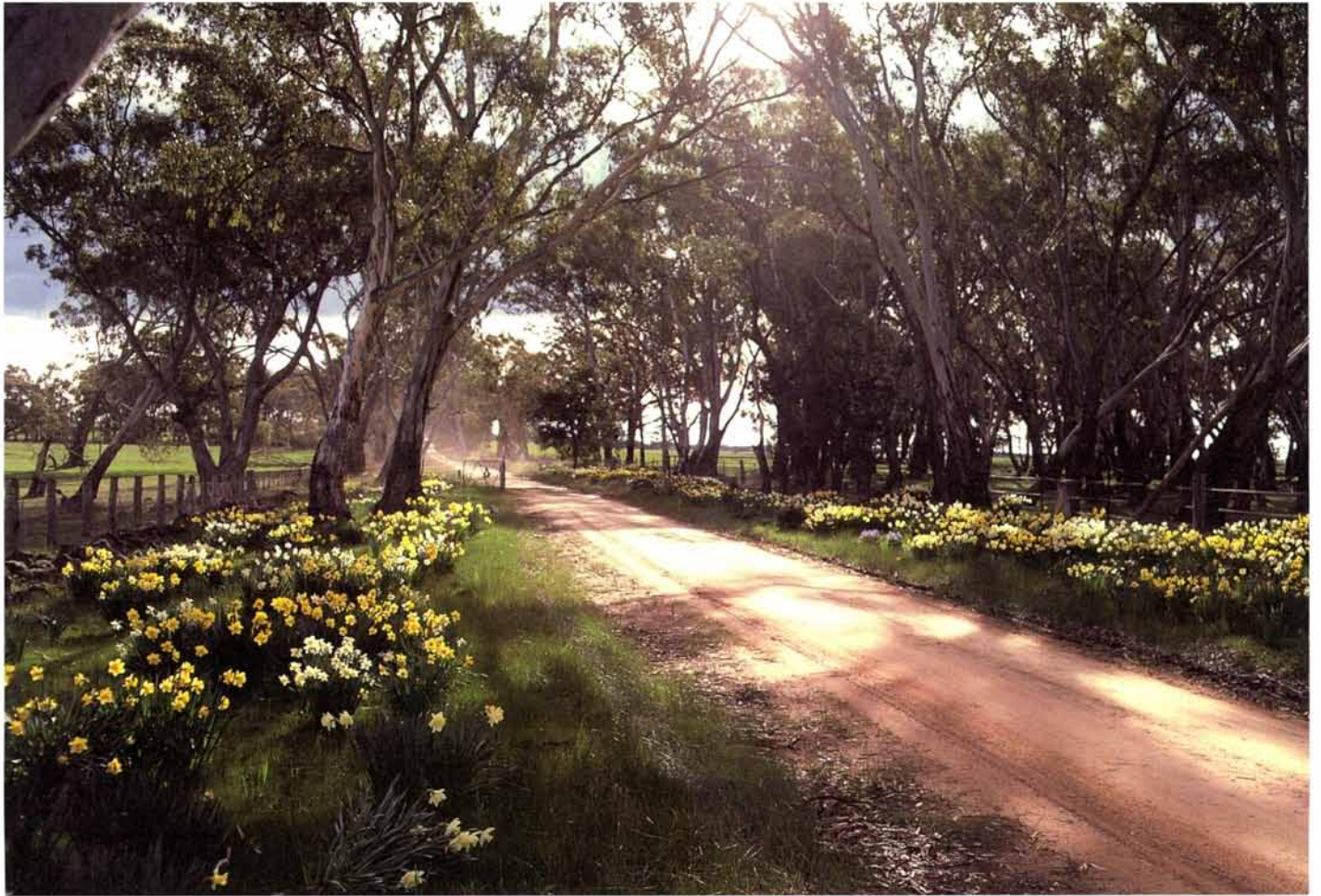
At Garangula in Harden, New South Wales, Vladimir Sitta has designed a modernistic masterpiece. Once a traditional farm garden around a nineteenth-century house, it has been transformed into a work of art. Sitta has used the land like a piece of canvas, shaping the earth and using aesthetic and atmospheric elements such as a water trough, a sunken green cathedral and water mist.

Garangula is functional and aesthetic. It has purely modern elements, but with references to traditions and classical styles of the past. Like so many Australian gardens, it features an unselfconscious mix of native and exotic plants. And like so many others, it is the product of a tradition that began when convicts planted the first seeds of a vegetable plot just three days after their arrival; a tradition that has seen Australian gardeners blend overseas ideas, plants and styles with the bush flora and the climate that so confounded them in the early years of settlement. For more than two centuries that tradition has been producing an eclecticism that is reflected at once in so many styles and mixes of styles and yet in just one style: the Australian gardening style. An evolving style that produces Australia's timeless gardens.



The horse trough in this contemporary country garden is one of many visual metaphors used by landscape architect Vladimir Sitta

Garangula, Harden,
New South Wales
Photograph by
Trisha Dixon



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G L O S S A R Y

Borrowed landscape

Using the surrounding landscape as a design tool by leaving vistas from the garden to the countryside beyond.

Federation garden

A product of the 1890s to 1920s, complementing the Federation-style house with its boldly decorative details. Assymetrical in design, the garden was usually simple in style to offset and frame the ornate house. Paths and driveways were often curved to give an informal effect with areas of well-kept lawn and a minimum of garden beds.

Gardenesque style

A style of garden first used by J.C. Loudon in 1832 to describe a type of planting in which each individual plant was allowed to develop its natural character. The term was subsequently used to describe a style of garden layout characterised by winding paths, botanic interest, subtle use of urns and arches, and flowers.

Grotto

A natural or contrived cave used as a cool retreat in a garden, often adorned with stones, shells and used for growing ferns and shade-loving plants.

Ha-ha

A sunken fence or retaining wall that is not seen from within the garden, giving the impression of the garden carrying through into the landscape.

Landscape style

A revolutionary departure from the formal garden style with its regimented axial planting. Its origins were in the late seventeenth century and at its height all flower beds and 'garden' objects were removed and the 'pure' landscape swept right up to the house.

Parterre

A decorative garden, usually designed on level ground in a symmetrical pattern, using clipped hedging, paths and shaped plants.

Picturesque style

A style based on the precept that landscape design should be picturesque, as in a perfectly composed painting. This presented a romanticised view of the landscape.

Topiary

The art of shaping plants into ornamental shapes. This practice has come in and out of fashion throughout the ages and is once again in vogue, particularly in city gardens.

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Australia's Timeless Gardens is a celebration of private gardening in Australia since 1788. Presenting more than 100 paintings, engravings, sketches and photographs from the collections of the National Library of Australia, it offers a pictorial tour through two centuries of gardening history.

Starting with the first garden at Government House in Sydney, Judith Baskin and Trisha Dixon trace the evolution of Australian gardening styles, influences and traditions: from the formal to the idiosyncratic, from the designs of William Guilfoyle in the nineteenth century to Edna Walling's in the twentieth century, from the extravagant to the simple.

Judith Baskin is a librarian turned garden writer and heritage consultant. After many years at the National Library of Australia she furthered a lifetime interest by studying landscape architecture. In 1995 she co-authored a heritage study of significant gardens in the ACT under a grant from the ACT Heritage Council. She is also a member of the National Trust of Australia (ACT) Classification Committee.

Trisha Dixon is a writer-photographer with a particular interest in historic gardens. She is editor of *Australian Garden History* and travels extensively around Australia photographing and researching early gardens. Trisha has written, photographed, co-authored and edited a number of garden books, including *Gardens in Time: In the Footsteps of Edna Walling* (1988), *The Essence of the Garden: Garden Design and Style* (1991) and *The Country Garden* (1992). Her photographic work has been exhibited by the National Trust and the Australian National Gallery.