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Eleven years ago I moved to Strathalbyn with my husband Peter and our two children, Alexandra and Andrew.

We initially rented a lovely old home on Melville Street while making up our minds where we wanted to live and after much soul searching as to what suited our lifestyle needs, we were lucky to buy a large block of land on the northern side of town and have built a new home which was completed about six years ago.

The first couple of years in our new home we concentrated on the house itself and a plan for the paving and landscaping.

Finding a tradesman who had the expertise to install drainage systems and build a retaining wall took us a while, so we have really only been establishing the garden itself over the last four years.

It is definitely a work in progress as I experiment through trial and error with what will grow with minimum care.

My love of gardens is strongly genetic as my mother and other family members are very keen gardeners and this has rubbed off on me over the years.

I grew up in suburban Adelaide in two different family homes and still love walking around my parents' home, talking plants with my mother who tries very hard to keep it looking good in these difficult gardening times.

I met Peter at the University of Adelaide where we both studied Medicine in the same year and

after marrying the year after graduation, we moved to Broken Hill where Peter worked for the Royal flying Doctor Service and I worked in the Broken Hill Base Hospital.

After a couple of years we moved back to Adelaide for Peter to do further study and for the birth of Alex, our first child.

We both worked hard in establishing a garden in an old home we had bought in Fullarton, but in less than a year, rented it out and moved back to the country to Mt Gambier as Peter was keen to pursue his career as a Country GP.

This was a great contrast to the desert environment of Broken Hill which I had developed a love for and we lived in small rental homes and therefore I could not establish my own garden.

Life was pretty busy anyway, so gardening was put on hold.

After three years in Mt Gambier we moved again to work for a year in a small town, Karooda, in the Mallee and ended up staying nearly ten years.

Andrew, our second child was born a few months before we moved there, so life was pretty busy again with a new baby and a three year old.

The house provided for us by the hospital had a wonderful native garden, landscaped by the Woods and Forest Department Nursery in Murray Bridge and was like an oasis in a very dry and hostile environment.

We enjoyed many lovely evenings looking out of our lounge room window onto our front garden that would glow in the evening light and was a haven for many local native birds.

The native groundcovers had flourished before we moved in and had formed a green carpet-like understory that always made you feel cooler on the many hot days.

Peter grew trees for Trees for Life and helped start a local LandCare Group (not easy to do in a farming area where trees were more often cut down than planted) and we helped plant the Tree for Life on friends' farms.

Many of these earlier experiences and environments have helped me build my knowledge of individual plants and trees.

I am growing many of them in my new garden in Strathalbyn, along with some local varieties.

I particularly enjoy nurturing plants given to me from my family's and friends' gardens or from the Garden Club meetings and trips.

We are lucky to have five very large eucalypts growing in our property and despite the continual clean-up necessary following seasonal malting of bark etc, we love their majesty and the bird life that they bring.

I think I will always be in love with plants if my mother or aunts are anything to go by, but seeing the pleasure gardening has brought them, I feel it is not a bad hobby to be hooked on.