

# Jocelyn Williamson - February 2018



**Review of my life:** I grew up in Ceduna, Cowell, Mt Gambier and Murray Bridge in South Australia and my mother was often out tending her garden so I had this example before me for years. She always had a vase of flowers inside and I now get great pleasure myself in being able to pick a bunch of flowers to take inside my home. It is a real thrill to think I had a hand in producing something so exquisite and perfumed.

I left home from Murray Bridge to work in Adelaide and met Richard there. When we married in 1976 we had a new home built in Coromandel Valley and spent hours landscaping and planting. On Mondays at work when everyone was talking about their exciting, wild or interesting weekends we would be able to report that we just kept working on retaining walls!!!! We had large areas on several levels as lawn and quite a few trees and shrubs. Richard was the main gardener in those days.

In 1989 we moved to Darwin with our two young children and loved the life style there. We often heard that you either love or hate Darwin and we were in the love category. We bought a home with a garden but of course wanted to put in a pool and make alterations. All we had to do was show a plant the garden and it started to grow for us. We put a coconut on the lawn and soon had a large tree. Everything was so lush, tropical and green, quite different to South Australia. We loved to go out in our Four Wheel Drive vehicle and had weekend camping trips to most of the exciting tourist spots and all the lesser-known lovely spots for four years.

We had the boxes of camping gear including some food items ready to go all the time. One evening when Richard was working out of Darwin for a few days we had 'severe wind storm' announcements on the radio which made me very concerned, but in the end it was no more than strong wind. Each house was built with a Cyclone shelter and ours was under the elevated house and we stored useful things and our camping gear there and thankfully never had to use it for a cyclone.

It was so interesting to adjust to the difference between SA and Darwin and now we have to be concerned with bush fire, not cyclone warnings.

Coromandel Valley was obviously in a bushfire area but in those days I was almost unconcerned of the dan-

ger and the CFS and Media did not spend so much time and resources in getting us educated on the subject.

Richard's work took him to Ayers Rock for three years and I returned to our home in Coromandel Valley with the children and we had many trips back and forth to each other. His unit in Ayers Rock was red dirt and just a couple of bushes. He put astro turf on the sand and had the best looking garden of all the units, even if it was only a few square meters of green 'grass' it made such a difference.

When we returned to Coromandel Valley the garden was neglected and we put time and effort into bringing it back to being something to be proud of and made a few changes along the way.

In 2008 we were looking for a smaller house with bigger sheds or shed space and bought a 20acre property just out of Meadows. It is a retirement plan to be self sufficient here, but Richard has not yet retired.

In our 10 years here we have made many changes, kept up the property maintenance, planted about 30 fruit trees, added several tanks for house and garden water supply and installed plenty of plumbing for watering. We fenced off an area of approx. 2 acres to be the fruit and veggie patch and have had a wonderful time trying out various things to grow. Some with great success and some not so.

The household garden was set out when we bought the property, but our continued changes and plantings have increased its size and appearance. We grew trees from seed from Trees for Life and also bought up box lots of trees for planting around the paddocks. Keeping animals away from trees is a constant job as the animals and trees grow. We have joined various garden groups and been to many discussion and lecture gatherings on fruit, weeds, pruning, property maintenance, Permaculture, Biodynamic Gardening, Organic farming etc.

We seem to partake in a happy mixture of the many ideas we have learnt. I used to have two gardening books and now we have a shelf full of them. Our paddocks had a lot of blackberry and gorse on them when we arrived so we bought goats to help us get rid of it. Between us and the goats we are winning this battle. I am amazed how a goat can put a thorny piece of gorse in its mouth and chew it all up. We currently have 16 goats and the original idea of using them to supplement our freezer of meat soon got squashed as we gave them names and hand fed them.

We have learnt so much and done so much since moving to Meadows and find it rewarding to see our achievements in 10 years, with Richard only having the weekends to do the heavy work. We are more and more concerned with the wonderful taste of home grown produce and the huge waste of resources of getting goods across the country for people and to top it off, it is in many layers of plastic or cardboard wrappings.

Our daughter and son are now adults and have left home so life is continuing on its ever changing and interesting cycle. Richard has restored several vehicles, pieces of furniture and we even have a 1960 Massey Ferguson tractor which I recently learnt to drive. While he is busy with restoration my interests other than gardening are hand crafts especially embroidery.

We are both involved with church and community commitments so are never idle. A friend invited me to join the Garden Club two years ago and I am so impressed with the friendliness of people and the quality of guest speakers. Life is a continuing learning cycle.