

Kerry Vaninetti - September 2018



I was so blessed to grow up on the banks of the Campaspe River in Echuca, Victoria.

At that time it was a small country town - not so now.

Our property was on the outskirts of the township - in the back paddocks I kept my pet sheep and a pony.

My Grandparents lived across the way from us and I remember opening the back gate where the heavenly smell of my grandmother's Violets filled the air.

I spent a lot of time in the hot summers in her beautiful ferny - she also grew Hollyhocks of different colours.

Dad grew all the vegetables we ate and mum bottled all the fruit from the block of fruit trees.

Mum had a large garden covering two blocks where cedar trees lined the driveways.

Deciduous trees left carpets of gold and red on the ground in autumn and we loved playing in the leaves like all children do.

I have no doubt that this is where my love for gardening has come from.

In 1973 my very own garden slowly took shape and as I worked long hours managing a hair-dressing salon I keep things pretty simple.

It was only when we moved here to South Australia that I had more time for gardening.

This property had an established garden so I added my touches.

Having two gardens in two very different climates and soils brought some challenges.

After both the children married the draw for more open spaces became irresistible, so in 1998 this block became ours.

My husband was back in his home town and I was again in a country setting.

In the 10 months it took to build our home I had plenty of time to plan our garden.

We spent a lot of weekends clearing the block - Blackberry and rivers of what I call Onion Weed dominated the ground.

It seemed like months that I sat on my behind pulling clumps of it out - today we see very few so it was time well spent.

Then there were the rocks, so many we didn't quite know what to do with them.

Finally with the house finished, the real fun could start.

We rotary hoed soil improver and coarse sand into the whole area and shaped our garden - in went the watering system, using wobblers due to low water pressure.

The lawns flow from front to back through the pickett gates making it continuous so when we no longer can manage cutting with standard mower we can use a ride on.

There are two levels in the front with moss rock retaining them and two also in the back.

We have a love for Birches, Conifers, Maples and Weeping Cherries which make up the bones of the garden.

In the 19 years our garden has changed from having 86 Roses and lots of English Lavender.

We have standard Roses and two beautiful arches of Pierre de Ronsard, but have reduced the number considerably.

Nandina border the edges of the mulched garden beds and they give us rich red colour in the winter and turn a lime green in the summer.

The garden is watered from the bore so we have no concerns keeping the water up to everything.

This time of year I love watching the bulbs coming into flower under the Birches and the clumps of Daffodils dancing in the breeze.

Because we are at the base of Mt Denis we enjoy so many beautiful birds which visit each day, not forgetting the koalas from time to time.

Our garden is where I feel so close to God.