

## **Welcome to Garden Geraghty at 3 Lee Point Road**

***Note: Please ensure children are supervised at all times, especially around ponds and pool and be aware there are potential tripping hazards in and around the garden.***

Tucked away inside a fence on the corner of a very busy road is our beautiful little tropical haven. Welcome to Garden Geraghty, we hope you enjoy your time here!

When we moved into 3 Lee Point Rd, in October 1980, the block was a mess, the garden non-existent, just a few straggly weeds, with scattered building materials and soil that had absorbed years of motor boat diesel.

My history with gardening started through experiencing my parents beautiful, lush, colourful and productive garden, it was a small but delightful garden, crammed full of colourful, flowering plants at the front; fruit, berries and vegies squeezed into every space found at the back. This was a world away in Aberdeen, Scotland, where I was born and lived until my family immigrated to Darwin in March 1970. I also learnt a lot of my tropical gardening skills from my Grandpa, who had push biked to Darwin from Gympie after his banana crops failed, in 1930 and had a 5-acre block full of different varieties of mango trees, paw paws, bananas, passionfruit and vegies, on Bagot Road (directly across from the Dolphin Hotel, for those that were here to remember). Darwin ran gardening competitions in those days and my Grandpa would drive us around to all the winning gardens. I was so proud when my fabulous Year 7 Parap Primary Teacher, Mrs Howard, who I remember had vases of home grown, colourful gladiolas or other flowers in the classroom, had won first prize for the best garden in 1970. All these things have influenced and fed my eclectic gardening style today, combining my love for colour, using space and growing plants to eat and use for healing.

Our garden has changed over the years as was necessary. Initially we grassed the front as a play area for the 3 children we raised, this area was edged with colourful plants. Where the unit is today we had built a large 6-sided shade house, which housed all my exotic plants and ferns. As the children grew older and didn't use the grassed area as much, we put in the pool that is there today, the shape was simply created from spreading around the garden hose, wanting the shape and colour to blend in with our existing tropical garden. The unit was then built when our children became teenagers and I said goodbye to my beloved shade house, however, I now have a small shade house up in the front corner and my potting area set up in the back section of the unit, where the shade house was. This back section was initially built to provide a dyeing area for my Rainbow Babes market business.

My husband Andrew and I have always worked extremely well in our garden together and have gained so much enjoyment, pleasure and fitness from it. I love the planting and arranging, he enjoys pruning, cutting up and mulching everything possible back into our garden, which has helped our soil tremendously. He has a great artistic talent and also helps with the heavier tasks. Make sure to see the bamboo fence he painstakingly made from the bamboo growing nearby at the back pond. One of his main tasks for our Open Garden day was to improve and add new paths so that you, our visitors, can not only walk easily around but also be able to see into the back parts of our garden, to give a different perspective and see the garden from within.

Cyclone Marcus caused a lot of damage to our garden last year. We lost many limbs from our magnificent Milkwood (near the pool) and many of the orchids, bromeliads growing up it and bird nest ferns growing on it. The bromeliads are slowly recovering and the bird nest ferns are now growing happily on the ground below the tree. The outer wall of the water trough, below the Milkwood tree, is where all our bird nest ferns in the garden were germinated. The large Milkwood is the only existing tree from when we moved in and was just a metre tall. During Cyclone Marcus, we had two hugh Cyprus Pine trees from the garden behind us, land on the house and unit, crushing the whole back garden. It is incredible how our garden has recovered; nature is truly amazing! The male and female pawpaw and the avocado tree sprung back with heaps of growth and the ground spinaches and sweet leaf returned within weeks. With the new back fence erected we are now able to replant, although you will notice many plants are still in pots whilst we try to improve the soil.

Our water features and certain flowering plants encourage many butterflies, bees, birds and reptile visitors and residents. We have had many bird visitors throughout the years including our famous suburban peacock, pacific bazzas, intermediate egret, pheasant coucals, rainbow lorikeets when the paperbark blossoms along with fruit bats, heaps of honeyeaters, rainbow bee-eaters, figbirds, drongos, kookaburras, mistletoe birds and crimson finches when mistletoe flowers on the Milkwood tree bloom and of course the occasional orange footed scrub fowls; I have managed to photograph a couple of the birds which are in our photo display. We also have monitor lizards who lived in an upright dead and hollowed black wattle tree behind the unit, where they'd rest and gaze down at us as we gardened; unfortunately it was knocked down in Cyclone Marcus, we've purposely left it there for the monitors who still reside in it. Nearby, in a blue plastic cut off drum is where the majority of our tree frogs spawn, you will also see plastic pipes, bromeliads and hollowed branches around as a number of safe havens for our frogs. I make fertiliser from horse manure, garden greens and soil bacteria, which is in the black bin nearby, this is watered into all our plants. We sadly lost our native bees, from hives they made in the back veranda poles, last year, we are unsure why, however they had been with us for as long as we can remember.

Please take the time to stroll leisurely around our garden; there is so much to see. We have labelled some plants with their common and botanical name for your information. Make sure you look up into the trees and palms and down into the bush and ground as there are many plant surprises to find growing, there are also some garden art work and handmade glass bead work (thanks to artist Gina Trengrove for her generous donations over the years). You will notice many of the plants are in pots, this allows me to shift them to different areas as the sun position changes during the year, it also allows me to change my garden design at any time, which I love to do! The back garden is my fresh green-grocery store! We have lots of edible green leaves including five different spinaches which we harvest all year round, sweet leaf, kang kung, basils, mints, chives, fennel which is in its second year, a 3 year old eggplant that has given us hundreds of long eggplants for stir fries and curries and one of my favourite herbs, Gotu kola (*Centella asiatica*), full of nutrients and something to add to your breakfast, salads, stir fries or curries. Another favourite herb is Chaste tree (*Vitex agnus-castus*), which herbalists use a herbal remedy made from the berries, for women's hormone issues and in the Middle Ages was given to monks to lower their libido. We also have rosellas, passionfruit, loofas and a variety of beans growing up the fence. This year I have had native bush rats and possums eating my vegetable seedlings, which I start sowing in early April each year and this is the first time I have ever had them eat the kale, wild rocket, coriander and Chinese cabbage in the raised garden bed. We do allow them and the fruit bats to share our pawpaws however this is the first year that they have started eating the pawpaws when green, very interesting! During the weekend I will be conducting some garden information walks on growing food in the tropics to eat.

We are supporting the [Darwin Hospice/Territory Palliative Care](#) this weekend. Take a break at anytime, sit and enjoy our selection of home made slices, cakes, coffee and tea at Garden Geraghty Café, run by volunteers and friends of our Territory Palliative Care (TPC), money raised from this and a small raffle (thanks to Estelle from Allora Gardens for donating the beautiful water feature) will go towards TPC resources and training programs.

Volunteers needed:

~ We are asking for some keen gardener volunteers to help in our Hospice Garden. No Hospice Training is needed for this. Please leave your contact details if you are interested, in the book provided at the Café. We need as many garden volunteers as possible to assist in keeping the large garden looking beautiful for the patients and families there.

~ If you are interested in being a volunteer in the Hospice and willing to complete a training program for this, we would love you to either complete the form provided or write your contact details in the book so that Madhu, the Social Worker and Volunteer Coordinator TPC, can send you the necessary information. Thank you.

There is also our plant stall with heaps of established plants for sale!

Andrew and I hope you enjoy your time in our garden.  
Thank you for attending.

**Paula**