

Drift

My family moved to Virginia in 2008, the block already had most of the garden areas although the planting was fairly sparse. Our first year we really had no idea about controlling the gamba grass, weeds etc during the wet season so the place got pretty wild. First lesson learnt, from that year on we were consistent with poisoning and removing the gamba grass as it appeared. After a couple of years we decided to invest in some lawn mowers to help do the job. We purchased two goats the first were called Victor and Rover. They turned out to be very good at keeping the grass at bay and were also enjoyable and very easy to manage due to their size and friendly nature. My daughter was only young and enjoyed having the goats to interact with. Would recommend them to anyone as an effective way of keeping your block well mowed however you do need a good fence to keep them in as it is amazing how high they can jump. My garden did suffer from the odd escape from their yard and they would go straight for anything that was in flower, seemed to really love the hibiscus. We also had a chook house with a dozen or so hens and a few ducks for quite a few years. Whenever kids came over to play they always seemed to make their way to the chook pen to collect eggs and say hi to the girls and then down to see the goats. Always great to see the kids interacting with animals.

There has not been any major planning put into the garden and the main inspiration has come from our many trips to Bali and attempting to create that same feel. We have also expanded some of the gardens to cover areas that always looked so bare and ugly during the dry season regardless of how much water we pumped into the lawn. It seems to take a lot less water to keep a mulched garden bed alive and well during the dry than to keep a lawn green. I have also tried to create separate areas by expanding the beds as the yard was just one big open space with a pool sitting in the middle of the lawn. We have also used a lot of gravel to add texture and a point of difference in areas where grass never grew well and to define spaces.

We have a small food area with three raised beds situated close to the old chook pen. We have had many successes and just as many failures here over the years. I find growing edibles quite challenging but continue to try each year. We also have some bannana trees that have fruit on them at the moment.

My family enjoys fishing and spending time on the coast and over the years this has allowed me to find some beautiful pieces of driftwood. I have featured some of the larger pieces throughout the yard some of them have plantings on them and some are just in the natural state they were in when I found them. My husband always cringes when he sees me spot a piece in the distance knowing the question will be asked, "Do you reckon you could get that on the ute". That is the other thing my garden is built on his blood, sweat and patience as he attempts to facilitate the vision I am trying to convey to him. A friend and I have been making some items from drift wood that we have collected and we will have them available for sale during the open garden.

Recently we have expanded the garden into an area which has just been natural bush. We have created a hidden pathway that starts at the front of the property and winds its way through the bush and leads you out into the pool and entertaining area at the rear of the house. It is a lovely aspect at the top of the hill looking down through the trees and a good place to sit quietly enjoying the breeze and do a bit of bird watching.

We also have another area hidden behind the pool and entertaining area with a large fire pit that is used often during the dry season. There aren't too many places where you can have a fire pit and a camp oven for dinner in your own back yard and one of our favourite things to do with friends during the dry. We have planted Rain Trees, Poinciana and Summer Scents here to create a screen.

Our garden is definitely a work in progress and a labour of love. We hope you enjoy it as much as we do and look forward to welcoming you over the weekend.