

Profile: Elizabeth Teed

AGHS's honorary treasurer has a strong belief in education. She shares with other members of our national committee a strong belief in the value of both gardens and history, something that shines through their voluntary work for the society. Like many other members of the national committee, agreeing to stand under the glare of the Profile spotlight was probably a harder task than all of the other hidden work they do.

Tell us about your background

I retired four years ago after a career as a business and IT teacher with Education Queensland. My recent teaching was at the Brisbane School of Distance Education. It is never seen as having the glamour of 'School of the Air' but it delivers education to children from Prep to Year 12 all over Queensland and overseas. It was a wonderful experience – I taught students to Senior level. When I started there, it was a correspondence school, marking papers posted in by students. Over the years we enjoyed the advances in technology and were able to deliver lessons online and access students' work on-screen in interactive lessons.

Are gardens something recent for you?

I have always been attracted to gardens, perhaps inspired by my grandmother. I remember how proud she was of her dahlias and caladiums (aroids). Caladiums and ferns were displayed in alcoves on the side of a pergola-covered driveway – it was a very innovative fern house.

In the 1970s I joined the Ferny Grove Garden Club in Brisbane. Most of the foundation members were related and were descendants of the original farming families in the area. They raised citrus, grapes, small crops, dairy cattle, pigs and poultry. Then I returned to study and started work, and the meetings became daytime meetings. I didn't have time for the club. After I retired I was very pleased to be able to rejoin the garden club. Some of the original people are still there although sadly we have lost the older members. Their farmlands have become housing developments, and it's where I now live. There are some wonderful successful gardeners in the group, as the bountiful display on the monthly competition table demonstrates.



Elizabeth Teed.
photo Kylie Teed

How did you come to know about AGHS?

I learnt about the Australian Garden History Society through another member of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland. I was captivated, as AGHS combined my interest in gardens and history. I was told of an event at the home and garden of fellow member Jani Haenke. Jani generously endowed the Queensland Branch with a bequest to fund a survey of heritage gardens in Queensland. When I joined AGHS in about 2007, I enjoyed a visit to Jani's garden and her generosity. A cutting of *Kalanchoe beharensis* ('elephant's ear') grew into a magnificent plant at my old house. Earlier this year we downsized, and a shoot I brought with me is already producing new leaves.

The new house came with an extraordinary planting of ten tuckeroo trees (*Cupaniopsis anacardioides*), standing in stones, on two sides of the small backyard. They grow to 10 metres or more, and should really be in a rainforest or lining the streets, not in a smallish garden. The trees have been pruned, the stones gradually replaced with plants, and the vegetable garden is flourishing.