

Profile: Bronwyn Blake

Tell us a little bit about yourself

One of my earliest memories is the joy of being sprayed by the garden hose my father was using to water the newly seeded front lawn of my parents' first home in Canberra. I don't recall the smell of the wet raked topsoil or the methodical way in which my father no doubt evenly spread the seed under my mother's watchful eye, but I do clearly recall the joy of being productive outside with my family. It is not surprising therefore that despite several career detours I now work in the garden industry.

More recently it was my great privilege to be part of the Open Gardens Australia team, which enabled me to meet so many generous gardeners and see so many diverse gardens throughout Australia. I was, and continue to be, endlessly impressed and fascinated by the resilience and ingenuity of Australian gardeners and the way in which each brings their own unique chapter to a garden's story (whether you like the chapter or not!).

What does your work involve now?

Coinciding with the unhappy closure of Open Gardens Australia I was fortunate enough to begin working for Angus Stewart, the most humble and extraordinary advocate and breeder of Australian native plants. Australia is so fortunate to have a network of specialists who have devoted their lives to understanding, preserving and cultivating our native flora. It is incredibly exciting to be part of this.

In between all the usual music and sporting commitments that come with having a busy young family, I also work in a couple of local gardens and am enjoying doing more design and consultation work on both old and new gardens.

And your own garden?

My husband and I love working in our garden in the historic NSW village of Gundaroo, but often lament about how little we absorbed from our parents, whilst being 'productive outside with our families' as children. Nevertheless, our cold-climate garden is a rich mix of espaliered fruit trees, a large vegie patch, ornamental gardens, pets, sand pits, trampolines and – more recently – a small synthetic hockey pitch! My garden is a place where I am continually rejuvenated and inspired.



A few thoughts on our Society's future?

Everyone yearns to be part of something purposeful. As we all know, throughout history, gardens have provided this. I have thoroughly enjoyed being a member of the dynamic ACT Monaro Riverina branch of AGHS, and look forward to continuing the Society's promotion and conservation of Australia's significant gardens and landscapes in new ways as a member of the national management committee. I hope that as Australia's villages, towns and cities continue to subdivide and expand, the Australian Garden History Society will be able to play an even greater role in educating, supporting, valuing and advocating for our precious landscapes.

New AGHS national management committee member Bronwyn Blake, of Gundaroo.

photo Harold Blake 2016