

EARLY AINSLIE GARDENS



Australian Garden History Society

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Five Gardens in the Corroboree Park Precinct, Ainslie, ACT



Iris Carnall admiring flowering plum blossom in Lister Crescent, 1948.

Ann Somers

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(front cover) Peg Norris' house and garden

(back cover) Gribble back garden shed

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Lister Crescent, Ainslie

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Corroboree Park

DEDICATION

This little book is dedicated, with thanks, to those who created and maintained the gardens described; and to Olive Browning and Lorna and Stan Evans whose deaths, followed so swiftly by the disappearance of their classic gardens, brought home to me the urgent need to record some of the remaining early gardens in the Corroboree Park precinct.

Preface and Acknowledgments

Corroboree Park precinct is a special neighborhood in Canberra, loved by its residents and by the many Canberrans who regularly pass through or visit it. The precinct is defined by its distinctive and graceful design. Narrow crescent roads radiate in symmetrical pairs on either side of the semi-circular park, stylish little weatherboard cottages are set on large blocks in attractive streetscapes, and the whole is richly planted with a mix of evergreen, deciduous, native and exotic trees. The magnificent plantings of white trunked eucalypts within and surrounding the park, the stunning springtime array of flowering plums alternating with pencil pines in some of the crescents, or the orange bursts of silky oak flowering in summer along other crescents, are indeed memorable.

Gardens are ephemeral, and those of Corroboree Park precinct especially so. Eighty years ago, the precinct was designed specifically to house 'artisans' - tradesmen and workers - who came to build the new national capital. The five gardens recorded represent the character of their early gardens: the front gardens were neat and public, the backyards were places of vegetable beds, fruit trees, chook yards and shade houses, at a time when garden hoses and lawn mowers were still a novelty. Now most of the generation who established the houses and their gardens are gone, their families have dispersed, and the precinct, which is in easy walking distance of the business centre of the national capital, has become prime real estate. The 'artisan' gardens of Corroboree Park precinct are disappearing rapidly.

Special thanks must go to the owners, who opened their gardens and their lives to us. Thanks especially to Maura O'Connor and Amanda Myers and to other members of the Australian Garden History Society, including Virginia and Paul Berger, Philippa Kelly, Jill Scheetz, Jeanne Trebeck, Gabrielle Tryon and Marcia Voce. Thanks to Sylvia Hughes who helped identify conifers, Rhett Somers for typing numerous drafts, David Cooper for helping to measure gardens, and Louise Lyon who lent photos and encouragement. Her book *Voices of Old Ainslie* offers fascinating glimpses into the lives of many early Ainslie residents, including four of our five garden families. Finally thanks to Henry Egloff and Juliet Ramsey for drafting the plans and to Beverly Swifte for the design and art production.

In the O'Reilly garden



RESIDENTIAL & MINOR INDUSTRIAL SITES

FEDERAL TERRITORY

CANBERRA

CANBERRA AVENUE & AINSLIE SUBDIVISIONS

TO BE OFFERED BY PUBLIC AUCTION AT THE COMMISSION OFFICES, CANBERRA, SATURDAY 9TH APRIL 1927 AT 2 O'CLOCK

The Director for the Sale of Government Lands

NOTE
 Plans of the lots to be sold will be available for inspection at the Commission Offices, Canberra, on the 2nd day of April 1927, from 10 o'clock a.m. to 4 o'clock p.m. on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, and 31st of April 1927.

WOODGERS & CALTHORPE
AUCTIONEERS, CANBERRA.

Scale Plan 1:1000

1927 Sales Plan of Corroboree Park Precinct

Background

The Corroboree Park area has always been a special place in the district. Prior to European settlement, a clump of eucalypts flourished here on the comparatively treeless limestone plains. Aboriginal people are reported to have held corroborees here, hence the name. The first white man to arrive in the district, James Ainslie, camped here in 1825 with his mob of sheep. Ainslie was a shepherd employed by a Sydney merchant, Robert Campbell, who sent Ainslie to the Limestone Plains to establish a sheep station, which in due course was located at Duntroon. Travellers who followed used to stop here to rest themselves and their horses in the shade of the eucalypts.

Corroboree Park precinct has been placed on the Register of the National Estate because, in addition to its Aboriginal and historic associations, the precinct 'clearly demonstrates the philosophy of Garden City planning which underpinned the early planning of Canberra.'¹ The distinctive curvilinear design of the precinct first appeared in the 1925 Plan for Canberra and is accredited to Sir John Sulman, Chairman of the Federal Capital Advisory Committee (1921-24.) Sulman was an advocate of 'the garden city environment which accorded with the spirit of Walter Burley Griffin's concept for the new city.'² Thomas Charles Weston, Superintendent of Parks, Gardens and Afforestation, Canberra (1913-26) was also committed to garden city principles, as were the principal government architects responsible for the precinct housing, H.M. Maitland, T.R. Casboulte, and E.H. Henderson. Their combined work resulted in a precinct which is remarkable for the way in which urban design, architecture and planting combine to exemplify garden city principles.

Sulman located the semicircle of the park around the existing knot of eucalypts, and Weston used these as the focus of his plantings. He planted many more eucalypts across the park, with an understory of mixed native and exotic smaller trees and shrubs. He used eucalypts as the street trees surrounding the park and planted the symmetrical pairs of crescents on either side of the park with either exotics or natives. The result is a green and shaded park which is the focus of sweeping perspective effects and is surrounded by spring blossom and summer and autumn colour - 'a very elegant and successful set piece of landscape architecture.'³

The precinct was allocated for 'timber cottage' construction, designated for 'artisan dwellings.' These were built from 1925-29, and were intended for the influx of tradesmen and workers expected to build the new city. A few privately built homes were permitted, but these were to be in similar style. The intention was to provide low cost housing, and the cottages were constructed of timber and fibro, with compact layouts and small dimensions. Nevertheless, the designs and finish of these cottages, with their simple, classic lines, terracotta tiled roofs, brick chimneys, wooden sash windows, high ceilings, and front verandahs are increasingly admired.

1. National Estate Register, Corroboree Park Precinct.

2. Ibid.

3. Quote from Stuart Mackenzie

Background



Lister Crescent today

In keeping with the garden suburb theme front fences were forbidden, the government instead providing hedges which it maintained until the war years. Garages were not provided but, if erected, were to be at the rear of the block.

When the first families arrived, they took possession of a large cleared block with paling side and rear fences, a new weatherboard house, and a newly planted front hedge. The following pages are an indication of what some of them did next.

The gardens



Camellia 'Grand Prix', O'Reilly garden.

IRIS AND KEITH CARNALL'S GARDEN

Iris Carnall was born in 1900 at Blundell's cottage in Canberra. (Mrs Blundell was the midwife in those days.) Her mother was born at Lanyon, and her father came to the district when he was sixteen. While Iris was growing up she lived at a number of historic properties where her parents worked, including Yarralumla (now the Governor-General's residence) and Duntroon. They also lived at Mugga Mugga. Iris' mother remembered Aboriginal corroborees in Corroboree Park when she was a girl, and showed Iris a tree where she said the tribal elder would sit with the others around him. The tree is still there.

Iris and Keith Carnall moved into their Corroboree Park home, just around the corner from their former home in Paterson Street, on 1 June 1930. Two other tenants had previously occupied the house but the only garden in place was the low front hedge.

Keith had a wonderful vegetable garden, chooks and many fruit trees, particularly black and red cherries and Jonathan and Delicious apple trees that were always loaded. He loved his lawn and the family used to play night bowls on it. The magnolia tree out the front was a gift to Iris from the next-door neighbour. It is now around 70 years old.

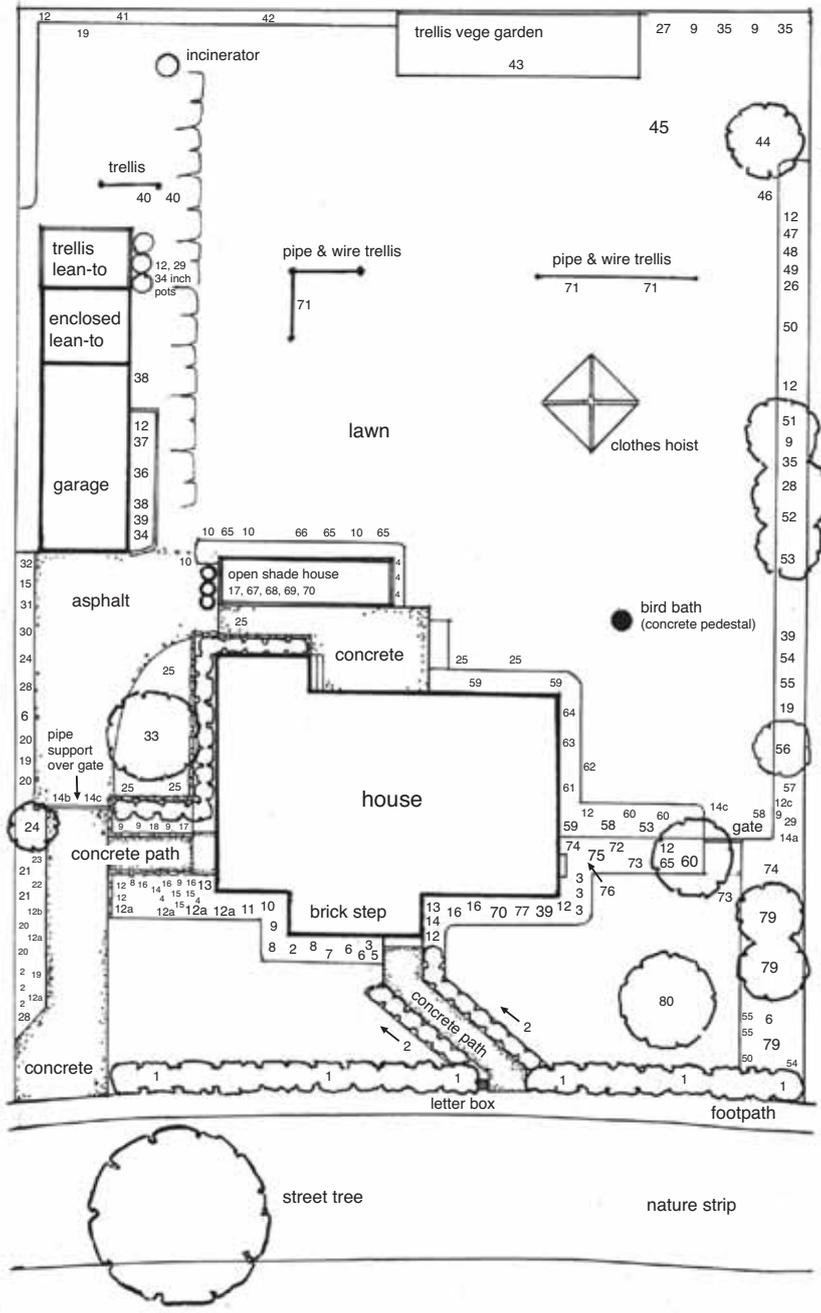
After Keith died in 1976 the fruit trees were removed because of problems with fruit fly and birds. Iris indulged in her passion for plants, particularly rare and unusual exotics such as the *Caesalpinia*, filling the beds with her favourites. Iris died in 1998.



Iris and Keith Carnall's house and garden today



Carnall garden and backyard. Photos courtesy Amanda Myers



CARNALL GARDEN Corroborree Park, Ainslie

PLANT LIST FOR CARNALL GARDEN, CORROBOREE PARK, AINSLIE

No.	Scientific Name	Common Name	No.	Scientific Name	Common Name
1	<i>Pyracantha angustifolia</i>	Firethorn	39	<i>Fuchsia</i> sp.	Fuschia
2	<i>Nandina domestica</i> 'nana'	Dwarf Sacred Bamboo	40	<i>Dahlia</i> sp.	Dahlia
3	<i>Myosotis alpestris</i>	Forget-Me-Not	41	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	Snow Berry
4	<i>Gerbera</i> sp.	African Daisy	42		Pumpkin
5	<i>Alyssum</i> sp.	Alyssum, Sweet Alice	43	<i>Vegetables</i>	Zucchini, rhubarb, tomatoes, onions, peas
6	<i>Hibiscus</i> sp.	Hibiscus	44	<i>Ficus</i> sp.	Fig
7	<i>Erica lusitanica</i>	Spanish Heath	45	<i>Caesalpinia pulcherrima</i>	Dwarf Poinciana
8	<i>Hemerocallis aurantiaca</i>	Day Lily	46	<i>Cotoneaster</i> sp.	Cotoneaster
9	<i>Viola odorata</i>	Violet	47	<i>Solanum pseudo-capsicum</i>	Winter Cherry
10	<i>Rhododendron</i> sp.	Azalea	48	<i>Rosemarinus officinalis</i>	Rosemary
11	<i>Agapanthus</i> sp.	African Lily	49	<i>Kniphofia uvaria</i>	Red Hot Poker
12 a	<i>Narcissus</i> sp.	Jonquil	50	<i>Zantedeschia elliottiana</i>	Golden Calla
12 b	<i>Gladiolus</i> sp.	Gladioli	51	<i>Magnolia</i> sp.	Magnolia
12 c	<i>Narcissus</i> sp.	Daffodil	52	<i>Ligustrum</i> sp.	Privet
13	<i>Pelargonium</i> sp.	Geranium	53	<i>Syringa</i> sp.	Lilac
14 a	<i>Rosa</i> sp.	Rose	54	<i>Weigela florida</i>	Weigela
14 b	<i>Rosa banksias</i>	Banksia Rose	55	<i>Ribes sanguineum</i>	Flowering Current
14 c	<i>Rosa</i> sp.	Climbing rose	56	<i>Lagerstroemia indica</i>	Crepe Myrtle
15	<i>Lilium</i> sp.	Lily	57	<i>Philadelphus mexicanus</i>	Mexican Mock orange
16	<i>Paeonia</i> sp.	Paeony	58	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Guelder Rose
17	<i>Paphiopedilum</i> sp.	Orchid	59	<i>Camellia japonica</i>	Camellia
18	<i>Rhododendron</i> sp.	Rhododendron	60	<i>Aquilegia</i> sp.	Columbine
19	<i>Spiraea betulifolia</i>	May	61	<i>Euphorbia wulfenii</i>	Spurge
20	<i>Chaenomeles japonica</i>	Japonica	62	<i>Abelia grandiflora</i>	Glossy Abelia
21	<i>Jasminum mesneyi</i>	Primrose Jasmine	63	<i>Hypericum</i> sp.	St. John's Wort
22	<i>Verbena</i> sp.	Verbena	64	<i>Punica granatum</i>	Pomegranate
23	<i>Rosmarinus prostratus</i>	Prostrate rosemary	65	<i>Dicentra spectabilis</i>	Bleeding Heart
24	<i>Alnus</i> sp.	Alder	66	<i>Clematis</i> sp.	Clematis
25	<i>Hydrangea</i> sp.	Hydrangea	67	<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy
26	<i>Vinca major</i> .	Periwinkle	68	<i>Pelargonium</i>	Geranium
27	<i>Iris</i> sp.	Iris	69		Cactus
28	<i>Prunus bilreana</i>	Purple Plum	70		Ferns
29	<i>Kolkwitzia amabilis</i>	Chinese Beauty Bush	71		Grapes
30	<i>Feijoa sellowiana</i>	Pineapple Guava,	72	<i>Helleborus</i> sp.	Winter rose
		Fruitsalad Tree Plant	73	<i>Acer negundo</i>	Box elder
31	<i>Lonicera fragrantissima</i>	Winter Honeysuckle	74	<i>Aucuba japonica</i>	Gold Dust Plant
32	<i>Kentanthrus</i> sp.	Valerian	75	<i>Michelia figo</i>	Portwine Magnolia
33	<i>Koelreuteria paniculata</i>	Golden Rain Tree	76	<i>Erigeron mucronatus</i>	Seaside Daisy, Mexican Daisy
34	<i>Lavandula</i> sp.	Lavender	78	<i>Coleonema</i> sp.	Diosma
35	<i>Chrysanthemum maximum</i>	Shasta Daisy	79	<i>Nerium oleander</i>	Oleander
36	<i>Chrysanthemum</i> sp.	Chrysanthemum	80	<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	Evergreen Magnolia
37	<i>Asparagus densiflorus</i>	Asparagus Fern			
38	<i>Thuja orientalis</i>	Book-leaf Pine			

HAROLD BEGENT'S GARDEN

Harold Begent was a fourth generation Tasmanian. His family moved to the mainland for work and, in 1929, when Harold was about 9, they came to the house in Higgins Crescent by Corroboree Park. Harold lived there until his death in 2003.

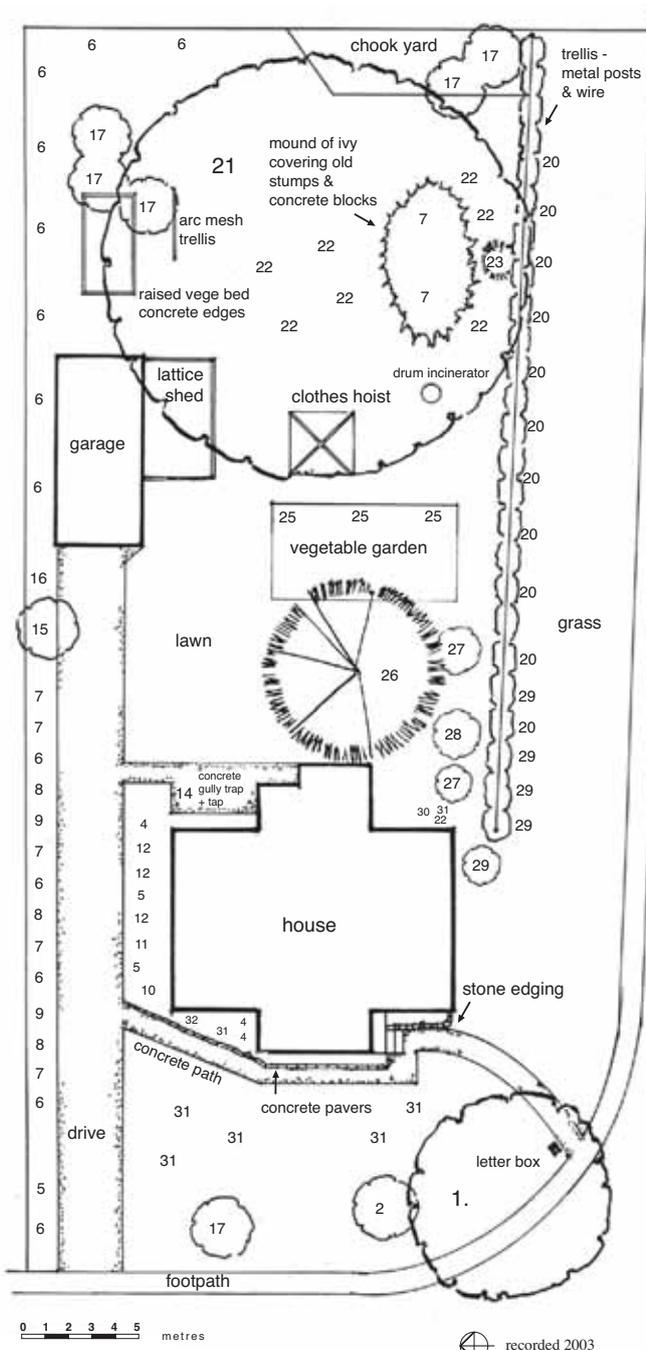
The vegetable gardens, fruit trees and chicken run were essential features of the original garden, probably established by Harold's father. Harold said that his family 'did all right during the Depression.' They shared and swapped produce with neighbours, and everyone collected wood from Mt Ainslie for the wood stoves and fires used for cooking and heating. Neighbours report that Harold loved growing vegetables all his life, and was very generous with them. The remains of some of the large vegetable gardens, with their last crops, could still be seen when the garden was recorded after his death.

Friends and neighbours agree that it was Harold's mother who planned and planted the ornamental garden. Many features, such as the types of large tree chosen (plane, oak and Douglas fir), the Dorothy Perkins rose hedge, and the use of naturalized bulbs under the trees and hedge and in the front lawn, indicate that she was a romantic gardener with a discerning eye.

Neighbours say that Harold loved the garden. He was especially proud of his fruit and vegetables, the rose by the front corner of the house, and the giant plane tree in the back yard (although he cursed its leaves in autumn!) He took pains to maintain the garden all his life, and is said to have been very concerned to preserve his mother's plantings, particularly the big trees.



Harold Begent's house and garden today



**PLANT LIST FOR BEGENT GARDEN,
HIGGINS CRES, AINSLIE**

No.	Scientific Name	Common Name
1	<i>Quercus</i> sp.	Oak removed in 2003
2	<i>Acacia baileyana</i>	Cootamundra Wattle
3	<i>Camellia</i> sp. 'Cherry Lin'	Camellia
4	<i>Bergenia x schmiditii</i>	Elephant Ears
5	<i>Rosa</i> sp.	Rose
6	<i>Vinca major</i>	Periwinkle
7	<i>Hedera helix</i>	English Ivy
8	<i>Prunus blireana</i>	Purple Plum
9	<i>Ligustrum</i> sp.	Privet
10	<i>Spiraea prunifolia 'Plena'</i>	May
11	<i>Rhododendron azalea</i> sp.	Azalea
12	<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	Rosemary
13	<i>Daphne odora</i>	Daphne
14	<i>Hydrangea</i> sp.	Hydrangea
15	<i>Ficus</i> sp.	Fig
16	<i>Nandina domestica</i>	Sacred Bamboo
17	<i>Prunus blireana</i>	Purple Plum
18	<i>Lonicera japonica</i>	Honeysuckle (from neighbour)
19	<i>Prunus armenica</i>	Apricot
20	<i>Rosa 'Dorothy Perkins'</i>	Rambler Rose
21	<i>Platanus</i> sp.	Plane Tree
22	<i>Muscari armeniacum</i>	Grape Hyacinth
23	<i>Cupressus sempervirens</i>	Pencil Pine
24	<i>Viola odorata</i>	Violet
25	<i>Rheum</i> sp.	Rhubarb
26	<i>Picea pungens</i>	Norway Spruce
27	<i>Syringa</i> sp.	Lilac
28	<i>Ilex</i> sp.	Holly
29	<i>Rosa banksiae</i>	Banksia Rose
30	<i>Hyacinthus</i> sp.	Hyacinth
31	<i>Freesia</i> sp.	Freesia
32	<i>Iris unguicularis</i>	Algerian Iris

BEGENT GARDEN Higgins Crescent, Ainslie

PEG NORRIS' GARDEN

Peg (Margaret) and Ben Norris were both born in Scotland. Peg came to Australia in 1913 as a three year old, Ben came about 1929. They arrived in Canberra in 1934 and lived first at Barry's dairy (Duntroon), then in Cowper Street, Ainslie. In 1940 they moved to the house in Lister Crescent because Peg, now with a young daughter, was recovering from a major operation and needed a smaller house to look after.

The house in Lister Crescent was not new, but little had been done in the garden. The Government had planted the *euonymous* hedge and continued to maintain it, as with all houses in the precinct. This service ceased during the war years.

Peg's husband Ben established the framework of the garden, laying out the beds, concreting edges and paths, and planting fruit trees. They brought the peach, apple and nectarine trees with them from Cowper Street. Many other plants were gifts from friends' gardens. Peg grew the hydrangeas from cuttings from a friend; the apricot she grew from a seed; the loquat was a seedling from a neighbour's tree across the road; the lilac was a sucker from a big old tree on

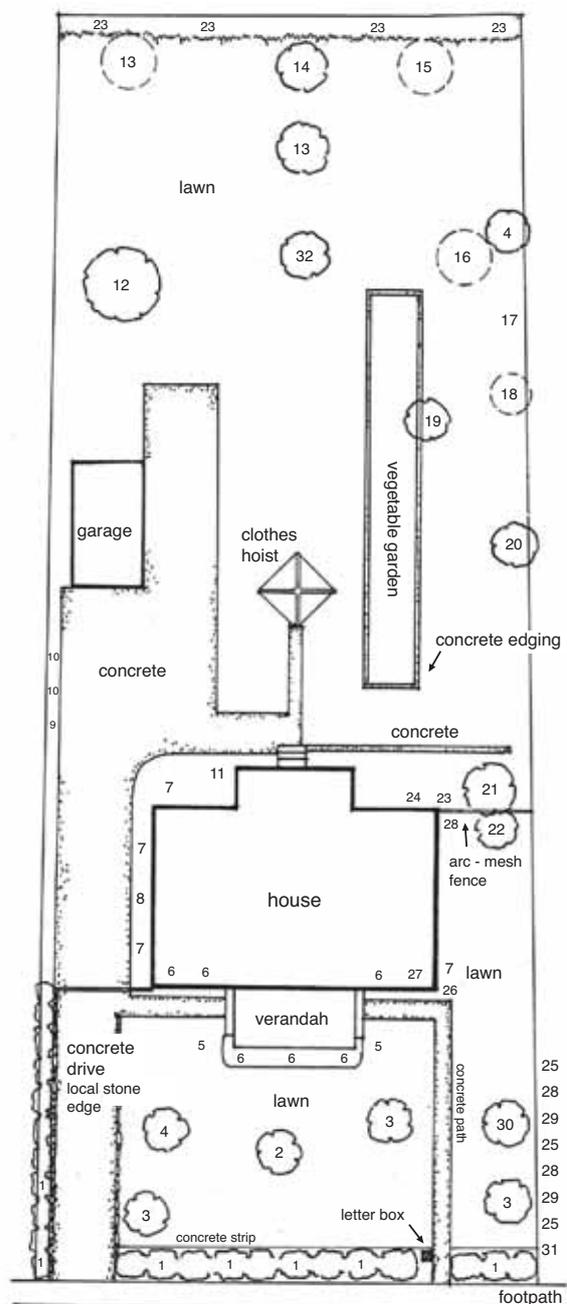
a farm which now lies under the waters of the Snowy River Scheme. The golden arums were first planted over thirty years ago.

Peg, who is 93, says she is not a gardener, but she loves flowers and her garden, and loves to be outdoors. She is a familiar sight on her front verandah, or out walking. Until recently she would walk to the Ainslie Football Club to meet friends and she still walks regularly to the local shops.



Peg Norris on her front verandah

**PLANT LIST FOR NORRIS GARDEN,
LISTER CRESCENT, AINSLIE**



0 1 2 3 4 5 metres

NORRIS GARDEN Lister Crescent, Ainslie



recorded 1998

No.	Scientific Name	Common Name
1	<i>Euonymus japonicus</i>	Japanese Laurel
2	<i>Callistemon</i> sp.	Bottle Brush
3	<i>Cotoneaster</i> sp.	Cotoneaster
4	<i>Escallonia macrantha</i>	Escallonia
5	<i>Nandina domestica</i> 'Nana'	Dwarf Sacred Bamboo
6	<i>Zantedeschia elliottiana</i>	Golden Calla
7	<i>Hydrangea</i> sp.	Hydrangea
8	<i>Buddleia davidii</i>	Butterfly Bush, Summer Lilac
9	<i>Rosa</i> sp.	Rose
10	<i>Agapanthus</i> sp.	Agapanthus
11	<i>Acanthus mollis</i>	Oyster plant
12	<i>Eriobotrya japonica</i>	Loquat
13	<i>Prunus persica</i> 'Nectarina'	Nectarine
14	<i>Prunus persica</i>	Peach
15	<i>Malus</i> sp.	Apple (dead)
16	<i>Prunus mume</i>	Japanese Apricot (dead)
17	<i>Lonicera fragrantissima</i>	Winter honeysuckle
18	<i>Cotinus coggryia</i>	Smoke Bush (dead)
19	<i>Weigelia florida</i> 'Variegata'	Variegated Smoke Bush
20	<i>Chaenomeles japonica</i>	Japonica, Flowering Quince
21	<i>Rhododendron</i> sp.	Rhododendron
22	<i>Spiraea prunifolia</i> 'Plena'	May
23	<i>Vinca minor</i> 'Variegata'	Dwarf Variegated Periwinkle
24	<i>Kentranthus macrosiphon</i>	Pink Valerian
25	<i>Ligustrum</i>	Privet
26	<i>Hemerocallis aurantiaca</i>	Day Lily
27	<i>Amaryllis belladonna</i>	Naked Lady, Belladonna Lily
28	<i>Pyracantha</i> sp.	Firethorn
29	<i>Lonicera japonica</i>	Honeysuckle
30	<i>Viburnum burkwoodii</i>	Burkwood's Viburnum
31	<i>Lilium</i> spp.	Lilies
32	<i>Springa</i> sp.	Lilac

NORMA AND TOM GRIBBLE'S GARDEN

Tom was born in 1911 on his grandparents farm outside Hall, and grew up on his parents farm *The Glebe*, which was church leasehold extending across what are now the suburbs of Fraser, Melba, Evatt and Florey.

Norma Gregory was the daughter of an early president of the Ainslie Football Club. The Club used to run dances and functions in Corroboree Park Hall. Norma and her mother did the suppers, and Tom (a top all round sportsman) played for the club and went to the dances.

In 1941, soon after they were married, Tom and Norma moved from *The Glebe* to the house in Higgins Crescent by Corroboree Park. Their new home was fibro and privately built.

Norma set about planning the garden and planting all the flowers and shrubs and some trees, while Tom focused on concreting the bed edges. Tom planted a number of trees in the back garden, but a friend planted the trees in the front garden, and these gave Tom a lot of trouble and ruined his lawn!

Norma worked as a florist and did flower arrangements for the Canberra Hotel. She obviously had a love of flowers and greenery, and the garden reflects this. Norma had the fish pond installed in memory of her mother, and also planted a memorial tree.

The wonderful old shed in the back garden came from the farm, and was originally a two-person hut used as workers' accommodation during the construction of Canberra. Over the years Tom and Norma extended the house, clad it with imitation brick, and added a breezeway across

the back to give protection from the western sun. In later years, a number of large trees had to be taken out, but the garden still has a woodland feel.

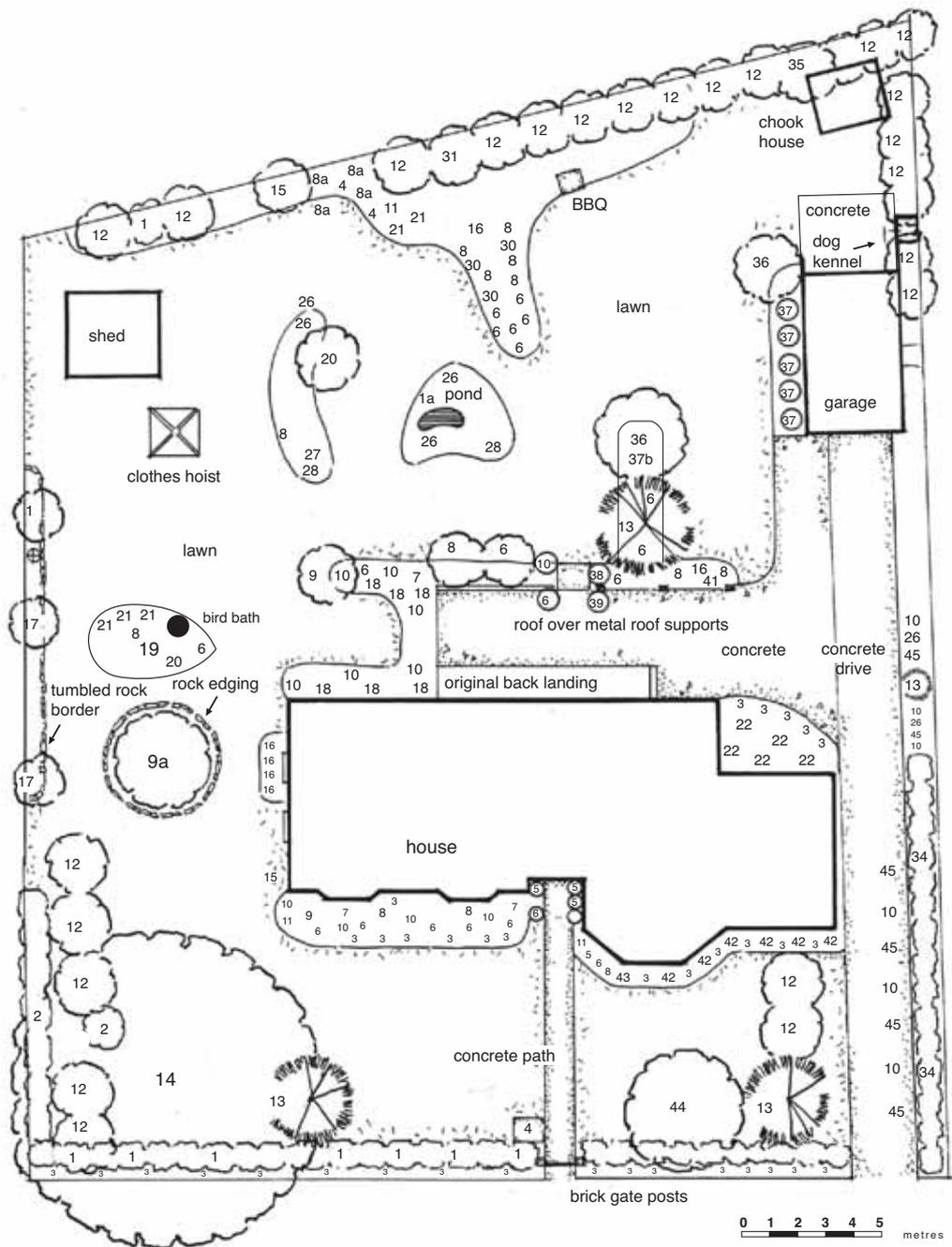
Norma died in 1987, and Tom in 2004.



Norma and Tom Gribble in their garden



Streetscape of Gribble garden and backyard



GRIBBLE GARDEN Higgins Crescent, Ainslie

recorded 2003

PLANT LIST FOR GRIBBLE GARDEN, HIGGINS CRESCENT, AINSLIE

No.	Scientific Name	Common Name	No.	Scientific Name	Common Name
1	<i>Cotoneaster</i> sp.	Cotoneaster	22 a	<i>Hedera helix</i> 'Marginata'	Variegated Ivy
1 a	<i>Cotoneaster</i> sp.	Dwarf Cotoneaster	23		Bulbs
2	<i>Ligustrum</i> sp.	Privet	24	<i>Penstemon gloxinioides</i>	Beard Tongue
3	<i>Nandina domestica</i>	Sacred Bamboo	25	<i>Wisteria sinensis</i> .	Chinese Wisteria
4	<i>Bergenia</i> x 'schmiditii'	Elephant Ears	26	<i>Agapanthus</i> sp.	Agapanthus
5	<i>Pelargonium</i> sp.	Geranium	27	<i>Agave</i> sp.	Agave
6	<i>Rhododendron</i> sp.	Azalea	28		Stump of elm
7	<i>Rosa</i> sp.	Rose	29	<i>Lonicera nitida</i> 'Aurea'	Boxleaf Honeysuckle
7 a	<i>Rosa</i> sp.	Climbing Rose	30	<i>Dicksonia Antarctica</i>	Tree Fern
8	<i>Camellia</i> sp.	Camellia	31	<i>Photinia serrulata</i>	Chinese Hawthorn
8 a	<i>Camellia sasanqua</i>	Camellia	32		Cactus in hanging basket on iron stanchion
9	<i>Magnolia</i> x 'soulangeana'	Soulange Bodin's Magnolia	33	<i>Dianthus barbatus</i>	Sweet William
9 a	<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	Evergreen Magnolia	34	<i>Euonymus japonicus</i>	Japanese Laurel, Spindle Tree
10	<i>Viola odorata</i>	Violets	35	<i>Celtis australis</i>	Nettle Tree
11	<i>Erigeron karvinskianus</i>	Vittadenia, Baby's Tears	36	<i>Nerium oleander</i>	Oleander
12	<i>Prunus blireiana</i>	Purple Plum	37	<i>Convallaria majalis</i>	Lily of the Valley
13	<i>Pinus</i> sp.	Pine	37 a	<i>Lilium</i> sp.	Lily
13 a	<i>Thuja orientalis</i>	Bookleaf pine	37 b		Green Lily
13 b	<i>Cupressus sempervirens</i> 'Stricta'	Pencil Pine	38		Aspidistra
14	<i>Quercus</i> sp.	Oak (now gone)	39	<i>Helliborus orientalis</i>	Winter Rose
15	<i>Weigela florida</i>	Weigela	40	<i>Daphne odora</i>	Daphne
16	<i>Hydrangea</i> sp.	Hydrangea	41	<i>Campanula medium</i>	Cantebury Bells
17	<i>Eriobotrya japonica</i>	Loquat	42	<i>Rhododendron</i> sp.	Rhododendron
18	<i>Scilla nonscripta</i>	English Bluebells	43	<i>Aucuba japonica</i>	Gold Dust Plant
19	<i>Cordyline australis</i>	Cabbage Tree	44	<i>Liquidamber styraciflua</i>	Liquidamber
20	<i>Prunus</i> sp.	Wild Cherry	45	<i>Anemone hupehensis</i>	Japanese Windflower
21	<i>Chrysanthemum maximum</i>	Shasta Daisy			
22	<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy			

MAVIS AND DON O'REILLY'S GARDEN

Mavis was born in 1921 on Tuggeranong station where her father was employed. He had been on Tuggeranong all his life; her mother came from Sutton. Don was born at Cathcart near Cooma in 1917 and came to Canberra when he was six years old. His family lived for the first two years in a home made of hessian stretched over stringy-bark poles, near where the road turns left off Kings Avenue Bridge towards Kingston.

Mavis and Don met on Athllon Station where Mavis was working. They married when Don returned from the war in 1945. They had great difficulty finding a home of their own and at one stage, just after the birth of their daughter, they pitched a tent on Limestone Avenue. Eventually they were able to buy the house in Higgins Crescent in 1948. They were its third owners.

The weatherboard house was built in 1926 but was later clad with brick to save on the painting. The garden was originally planted with seventeen fruit trees, grapevines and cannas, plus honeysuckle along the fences. The front had a small, stark hedge, while in the backyard there was a chook run and hen house on the back fence along with the garage.

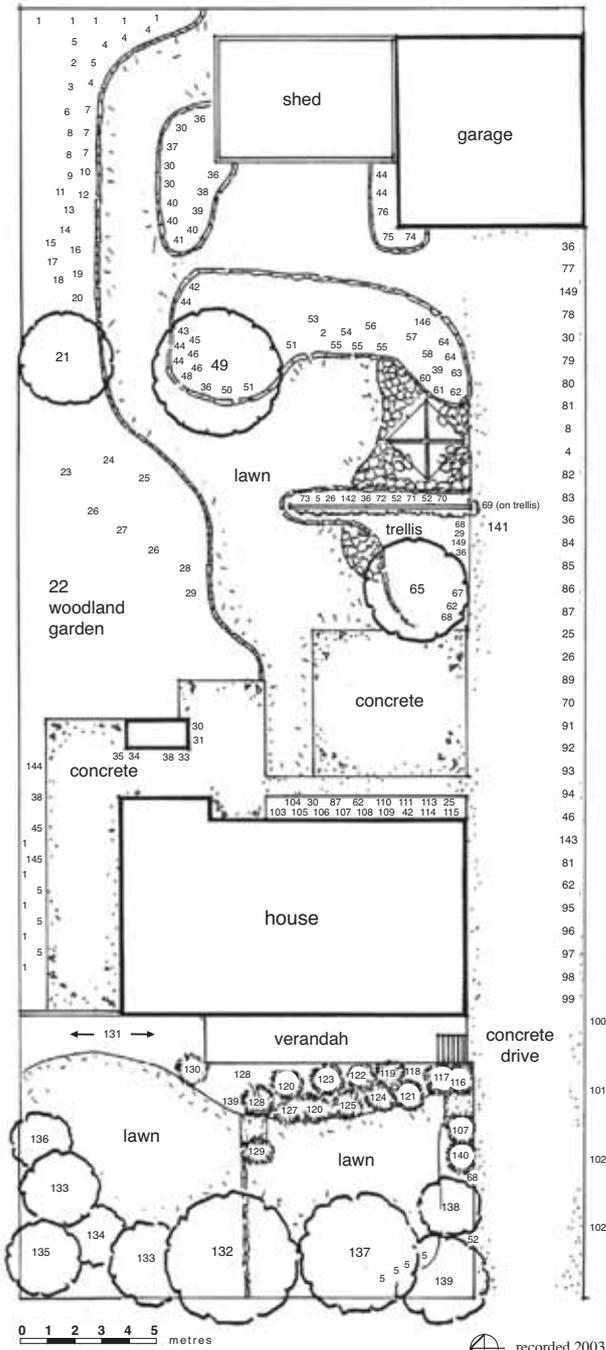
Mavis and Don removed all the fruit trees and replaced them with shade trees including the magnificent *Acer negundo*. A glass house and large work shed adjoining the garage replaced the chook run.

Keen gardeners, Mavis and Don will be remembered for their Blue Range camellia nursery at West Belconnen, which began in their back garden. While the nursery closed in the 1980s their garden flourished and over 173 camellia varieties can be found there today, along with rhododendrons and azaleas in a delightful woodland setting. This is a plantsman's garden and one registered camellia, *Camellia* 'Mavis Edna' was named after Mavis.



In 2003 Mavis and Don reluctantly sold their home and garden, and moved to a more manageable terrace unit in Ainslie where they have been busy planting its two courtyards.

*Mavis and Don O'Reilly
in their garden*



O'REILLY GARDEN Higgins Crescent, Ainslie

PLANT LIST FOR O'REILLY GARDEN, HIGGINS CRES, AINSLIE

No.	Scientific Name	Common Name	No.	Scientific Name	Common Name
1	<i>Camellia japonica</i> 'Firone'	Camellia	34	<i>Haemanthus coccineus</i>	Paint-brush Lily
2	<i>Rhododendron</i> 'Florence Mann'	Rhododendron	35	<i>Lunaria biennis</i>	Money Plant, Honesty
3	<i>Camellia x williamsii</i> 'Margaret Waterhouse'	Camellia	36	<i>Rhododendron molle</i>	Mollis Azalea
4	<i>Campanula</i> sp.	Bellflowers	37	<i>Paeonia</i> sp.	Herbaceous Paeony
5	<i>Rhododendron</i> 'Rose Queen', 'Kirin', 'Pink Party Dress' and 'Fairy Queen'	Azaleas	38	<i>Dicksonia antarctica</i>	Tree fern
6	<i>Camellia</i> 'Galaxie'	Camellia	39	<i>Jasminum</i> sp.	Jasmine
7	<i>Nerine</i> sp.	Nerine	40	<i>Lapeyrousia cruenta</i>	Lapeyrousia, Scarlet Freesia
8	<i>Phlox</i> sp.	Phlox	41	<i>Rosa</i> 'Handel'	Rose
9		Daisy	42	<i>Rhododendron</i> 'Cynthia'	Rhododendron
10	<i>Primula x polyantha</i>	Polyanthus Primrose	43	<i>Freesia</i> sp.	Freesias
11	<i>Camellia</i> 'Hiryu'	Camellia	44	<i>Rhododendron</i> sp.	Grafted Rhododendron
12	<i>Lavandula spica</i>	English Lavender	45	<i>Acer palmatum</i>	Japanese maple (weeping)
13	<i>Camellia</i> 'Elegans Champagne'	Camellia	46	<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	Columbine, Granny's Bonnets
14	<i>Rhododendron</i> sp.	Rhododendron	47	<i>Amaryllis belladonna</i>	Belladonna Lily, Naked Lady
15	<i>Camellia</i> 'Grace Albriton'	Camellia	48	<i>Sternbergia lutea</i>	Winter Crocus
16	<i>Camellia</i> 'CM Wilson'	Camellia	49	<i>Acer negundo</i>	Box-elder
17	<i>Cornus florida</i>	Flowering Dogwood	50	<i>Rhododendron</i> 'Blue Tit'	Rhododendron
18	<i>Camellia</i> 'Tootsie'	Camellia	51	<i>Camellia</i> 'Chansonette'	Camellia
19	<i>Paeonia suffruticosa</i>	Tree Paeony	52	<i>Heuchera sanguina</i>	Heuchera
20	<i>Deutzia gracilis</i>	Slender Deutzia	53	<i>Camellia</i> 'Demitusse'	Camellia
21	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i> 'Cuprea'	Copper Beech	54	<i>Rhododendron</i> 'Alice'	Rhododendron
22	<i>Camellia</i> spp. refer end of list*	58 camellia cultivars creating a woodland area in the garden	55	<i>Ophiopogon planiscapus</i> <i>nigrens</i>	Black Mondo Grass
23	<i>Corydalis cashmeriana</i>	Corydalis Blue	56	<i>Camellia</i> 'Pygmy'	Camellia
24	<i>Daphne odora</i> 'Marginata'	Variiegated Daphne	57	<i>Camellia</i> 'Showa Supreme'	Camellia
25	<i>Geranium</i> sp.	Geranium	58	<i>Camellia</i> 'Tanya'	Camellia
26	<i>Acer palmatum</i>	Japanese Maple	59	<i>Camellia reticulata</i> 'Miss Telare'	Camellia
27	<i>Stretocarpus</i> sp.	Cape Primrose	60	<i>Picea glauca</i> 'Albertiana Conica'	Alberta Spruce - Dwarf
28	<i>Campanula medium</i>	Canterbury Bells	61	<i>Iberis amara</i>	Candytuft
29	<i>Impatiens</i> sp.	Snapweed	62	<i>Lychmis</i> sp.	Campion
30	<i>Begonia</i> sp.	Begonia	63	<i>Rhododendron</i> 'Honey Bunch'	Azalea Honey Bunch
31	<i>Fortunella japonica</i>	Cumquat	64	<i>Camellia sasanqua</i>	Camellia
32	<i>Asparagus</i>	Asparagus			
33	<i>Campanula isophylla</i>	Bell Flower			

Plant List For O'Reilly Garden, Higgins Cres, Ainslie continued

No.	Scientific Name	Common Name	No.	Scientific Name	Common Name
65	<i>Sophora japonica</i>	Pagoda Tree	103	<i>Daphne odora</i>	Daphne
66	<i>Camellia</i> 'Cinnamon Cindy'	Camellia	104	<i>Cyclamen</i> sp.	Cyclamen
67	<i>Dicentra</i> sp.	Bleeding Heart	105	<i>Camellia</i> sp.	Camellia
68	<i>Nemesia</i> sp.	Nemesia	106	<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	Columbine, Granny's Bonnet
69	<i>Clematis jackmanii</i> 'S. Martin'	Clematis	107	<i>Osmanthus fragrans</i>	Sweet Osmanthus
70	<i>Camellia</i> sp.	Camellia	108	<i>Artemisia absinthium</i>	Wormwood
71	<i>Clematis montana</i>	Traveller's Joy	109	<i>Fuchsia</i> sp.	Fuchsia
72	<i>Camellia</i> 'Marge Miller'	Prostrate Camellia	110	<i>Dicentra</i> sp.	Bleeding Heart
73	<i>Dianthus caryophyllus</i>	Carnation	111		White daisy
74	<i>Solanum jasminoides</i> 'Alba'	Potato Vine	112	<i>Rhododendron</i> 'Snow Lady'	Rhododendron
75	<i>Convallaria majalis</i>	Lily of the Valley	113		Pink daisy
76	<i>Polygonatum multiflorum</i>	Solomon's Seal	114	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i> 'Variegata'	Variegated Box
77	<i>Euonymus japonicus</i>	Japanese Laurel, Spindle Tree	115	<i>Erica</i> sp.	Erica
78	<i>Chrysanthemum</i> sp.	Chrysanthemum	116	<i>Rhododendron</i> 'White Pearl'	Rhododendron
79	<i>Coleonema pulchrum</i>	Diosma	117	<i>Cyclamen hederifolium</i>	Rock Cyclamen
80	<i>Correa</i> sp.	Correa	118	<i>Cryptomeria japonica</i> 'Vilmoriniana'	Dwarf Japanese Cedar
81	<i>Forsythia suspense</i>	Golden Bells	119	<i>Taxus baccata</i> 'Fastigiata'	Irish Yew
82	<i>Camellia</i> sp.	Camellia	120	<i>Pinus mugo</i> 'Rostrata'	Mountain Pine
83	<i>Pittosporum</i> sp.	Dwarf Pittosporum	121	<i>Picea abies</i> (cultivar)	Norway Spruce - cultivar
84	<i>Osmanthus fragrans</i>	Sweet Osmanthus	122	<i>Thuja orientalis</i>	Chinese Thuja
85	<i>Camellia</i> sp.	Camellia	123	<i>Chamaecyparis pisifera</i> 'Nana Aureo-variegata'	False Cypress
86	<i>Pittosporum</i> sp.	Pittosporum	124	<i>Chamaecyparis obtusa</i> 'Nana'	False Cypress
87	<i>Scilla campanulata</i>	Blue Bells	125	<i>Cedrus deodara</i> (dwarf cultivar)	Dwarf Deodar
89	<i>Hedera</i> sp.	Ivy	126	<i>Chamaecyparis lawsoniana</i> 'Green Globe'	Lawson Cypress
90	<i>Camellia</i> sp.	Camellia	127	<i>Juniperus taxifolia</i> 'lutchuensis'	Juniper cultivar
91	<i>Sisyrinchium alba</i>	Sisyrinchium	128	<i>Juniperus communis</i> 'Fastigata'	Irish Juniper
92	<i>Sisyrinchium</i> 'Devon Skies'	Sisyrinchium, Blue eyed grass	129	<i>Thuja orientalis</i>	Chinese Thuja - greenform
93	<i>Nemesia</i> sp.	Nemesia	130	<i>Chamaecyparis pisifera</i> (cultivar)	Sowora Cypress
94	<i>Weigela florida</i> 'Variegata'	Variegated Weigela	131	<i>Camellia</i> spp. and <i>Rhododendron</i> spp.	Cluster of Camellias and Azaleas
95	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	Box			
96	<i>Sempervivum</i> sp.	Hen and chicken			
97	<i>Camellia</i> 'Yoi Michi'	Camellia			
98	<i>Lavandula</i> sp.	Lavender			
99	<i>Camellia</i> 'Pearls Pet'	Camellia			
100	<i>Escallonia</i> sp.	Escallonia			
101	<i>Ilex</i> sp.	Holly			
102	<i>Lagerstroemia indica</i>	Crepe Myrtle, Pride of India			

Plant List For O'Reilly Garden, Higgins Cres, Ainslie continued

No.	Scientific Name	Common Name	
132	<i>Liquidamber styraciflua</i>	Sweet Gum	*22 58 camellias including C. 'Beatrice Emily', 'Clarence Hearn', 'Cornelian', 'Mavis Edna', 'Water Lily', 'Brushfield's Yellow', 'Great Eastern', 'Czar', 'Spring Sonnet', 'Erin Farmer', 'Fashionata', 'Grand Slam', 'Easter Morn', 'Guillio Nuchio', 'Kramer's Supreme', 'Kuma Saka', 'Tiffany', 'Magnolia Flora', 'Margaret Davis', 'EG Waterhouse', 'Red Rose', 'Dixie Night', 'Susie Fortson', 'Georgia Rouse', 'Prince Frederick William', 'Hawaii', 'Kitty', 'Tiny Princess', 'Carter's Sunburst Pink', 'Tomorrow', 'Park Hill', 'Frances Hill', 'Dolly Dyer', 'Grand Slam', 'Ballet Dancer', 'Edith Lynton', 'Nancy Bird', 'Crimson Robe', 'Spring Sonnet', 'Maroon and Gold', 'Pink Diddy Mealing', and 'Gwyneth Morey'
133	<i>Prunus serrulata</i> 'Mt. Fuji'	White Flowering Cherry	
134	<i>Callistmon</i> sp.	Bottlebrush	
135	<i>Nerium oleander</i>	Oleander	
136	<i>Alyssum saxatile</i>	Gold Dust, Alyssum	
137	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> 'Aurea'	Golden Ash	
138	<i>Garrya elliptica</i> 'James Roof'	Garrya, Silk Tassel Bush	
139	<i>Cornus florida</i> 'Rubra'	Flowering Dogwood	
140	<i>Cryptomeria japonica</i>	Japanese Cedar	
141	<i>Rhododendron</i> 'Unique'	Rhododendron	
142	<i>Alyssum</i> sp.	Alyssum, Sweet Alice	
143	<i>Pittosporum crassifolium</i> 'Variegatum'	Variegated Pittosporum	
144	<i>Hamamelis mollis</i>	Chinese Witch Hazel	
145	<i>Iris</i> sp.	Water Iris	
146	<i>Rhododendron molle</i>	Mollis Azalea	
147	<i>Cerastigma willmottianum</i>	Ceratostigma	



Mavis O'Reilly with the Mavis Edna Camellia

Conclusion

These five gardens turned out to be an interesting cross section. They range from gardenesque to utilitarian, from specialist to minimalist, yet they exhibit common features. Some of these features are the result of planning regulations, for example all have unfenced front gardens – this accords with the original plan, which banned front fences in order to enhance the park-like atmosphere. Instead, hedges were provided and initially maintained by the government. Three of the five gardens still have their original hedge. All have a long straight drive down one side of the block and a garage to the rear of the house. This again is the result of government planning requirements: garages were to be unobtrusive and sited to the rear of the block, to promote the garden landscape concept.

Four of the five gardens have a shade house, be it a timber and lattice lean-to or a concrete and brick breezeway. These four gardens have focused on providing shade, with shady trees as well as shade-houses. It seems that Canberra's fierce sun and hot summers have long been a concern.

Four of the five (but not necessarily the same four) still have vegetable gardens, fruit trees, a chook yard (or vestiges of one) and some form of garden shed. All of the gardens have a rotary clothes hoist. The government planners provided large blocks to enable the 'artisans' to be as self sufficient as possible; and the residents certainly did their best to comply.

Four of the gardens display designs in curves and free-form, even if only in the placement of the front path. It seems that many residents felt a need to soften the spare, straight lines of the little cottages sitting square on their blocks.

There are many plants in common. Weston established a government nursery at Yarralumla which provided a free plant issue to all new householders. There are many other factors contributing to the prevalence of certain plants, for example: the practice of giving or swapping cuttings, seedlings and seeds from local gardens; the dearth of plant nurseries and the rather limited stock that would have been available in Canberra's early years; plant fashion of the day; and finally, Canberra's climate (which is quite extreme with hot, dry summers and winter lows of around -5 degrees C) limits the range of plants which do well in the home garden.



A corner of the O'Reilly garden

Conclusion

One of the interesting things about these gardens is the lack of natives. Weston deliberately used a mix of natives and exotics in the park and as street trees, but the residents generally chose not to emulate this in their gardens.

Notwithstanding their similarities, each garden has its own individual charm. Each bears witness to the lives and the interests of its owners. Collectively, they contribute to the greater garden of the precinct.

One final comment: the three hedges we recorded were all trimmed very low. One (*pyracantha*) was only about 40cms high, the other two were 75cm and 1 metre respectively. When recording began there were a few more miniature hedges in the area. This was quite remarkable for 60-70 year old hedges and I commented on it to one elderly resident. She responded that in the old days the hedges were always kept low. Everybody preferred that: they liked to be able to see where the children were playing and who was coming down the road and what other people were doing in their gardens. Now, newcomers to the area grew their hedges thick and high and retreated behind them. 'I can't see into my neighbours' places now, I don't know *what* they're doing in there and I don't like it!' she finished indignantly.

Times change, and gardens change with the times. This description of five gardens is a snapshot in time, an indication of the character of the 'artisan' gardens of Corroboree Park.

Note

Since the gardens were recorded three of the original owners have died, four of the properties have changed hands, and two have been substantially redeveloped.

Naming of plants

Where known, the genus and species (generic and specific) name is given in italics. Where the species is not known, the abbreviation 'sp.' (singular) or 'spp.' (plural) is added. A capital letter X between names indicates that the plant is an artificial cross. The variety names are shown in quotes. Cultivar names are also in quotes as part of the common name.

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