

My Garden

Report on August outing

Peter and Margaret Lynch's Garden at North Narooma (text by Margaret)

Sitting on a sunny verandah overlooking our "new" garden and with the ocean just down the hill, life for us in suburbia is pretty good. Our previous homes have all been on acreages located out of town so for us this is a new experience.

We moved into an established house in North Narooma almost 2 years ago. Changes to the garden were inevitable and began by removing most of the lawns and largely exotic plants. Hedges which provide screening from neighbours were retained as well as a Frangipani (*Plumeria obtusa*) and Smoke Tree (*Cotinus coggygia* "Purpureus") which each give a satisfying sculptural form emphasised by bare branches over winter. Fortunately the sloping site had been terraced with extensive rock walling providing some structure to work with.

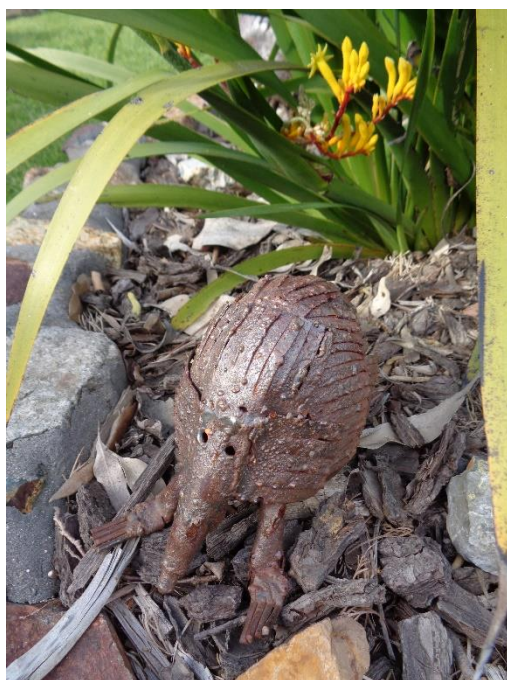
The plan was always to have a garden of Australian plants both for our own pleasure and to encourage birds and butterflies (also for our pleasure). The suburban location and a desire for low maintenance determined the garden consist of groundcovers and shrubs no greater in height than 1.5 m apart from screen plantings and the odd feature. A far cry from the free rein I had out of town.

So after mulching new areas and weeding and topping up others the fun of planting into rocky ground began. I had a very large number of plants propagated from material in the previous garden and desperate to be in the ground after 12 months in pots.

These were augmented by purchases from nurseries where the range of smaller, compact cultivars for suburban gardens has seen a marked increase. A number of local species from ERBG also added to the mix. It is always pleasing when plants from the local area fit the bill. For example *Acacia cognata*, *Tristaniopsis collina*, *Hakea macreana*, *Elaeocarpus reticularis* and *Ceratopetalum gummiferum* have all formed part of a screen planting. Even though the beds are relatively small I have managed repeat plantings of some species which I think helps with the flow in an area. Plants have also been chosen for foliage and form as well as flowers. The addition of bird baths and old animal ornaments completed the picture.



**Margaret discusses with group members
plant choices in her front garden**



**The echidna on the
left,**

**and ladybeetles on the
right,**

**are some of the
animals which adorn
Peter and Margaret's
garden**



Generally plants have thrived apart from some for which conditions over the past 12 months proved too dry, too wet or just unsuitable for the plants chosen. Always there is an element of trial and error, a pleasant surprise when a touchy plant thrives and a challenge or two. That's gardening!



These photos by Amanda Marsh show some of the delightful plants in Peter and Margaret's garden. Mauve flowered *Eremophila nivea* is a grafted plant, and shows the benefit of this method of propagating difficult plants.

White daisy flowers of *Bracteanthea bracteata* highlights the other flowers in the garden bed, and *Epacris longiflora* from the Sydney sandstone has proved a reliable and long flowering plant in some members gardens for many years



A well positioned bird bath is frequented by many smaller birds throughout the day. Planting close by provides refuge, and a range of shrubs offer food not just to honeyeaters but also the smaller insect eating birds. The stone retaining wall is typical of the decorative use of local stone for landscaping much of the garden.