

## GARDEN NOTES - WHISTLEWOOD -

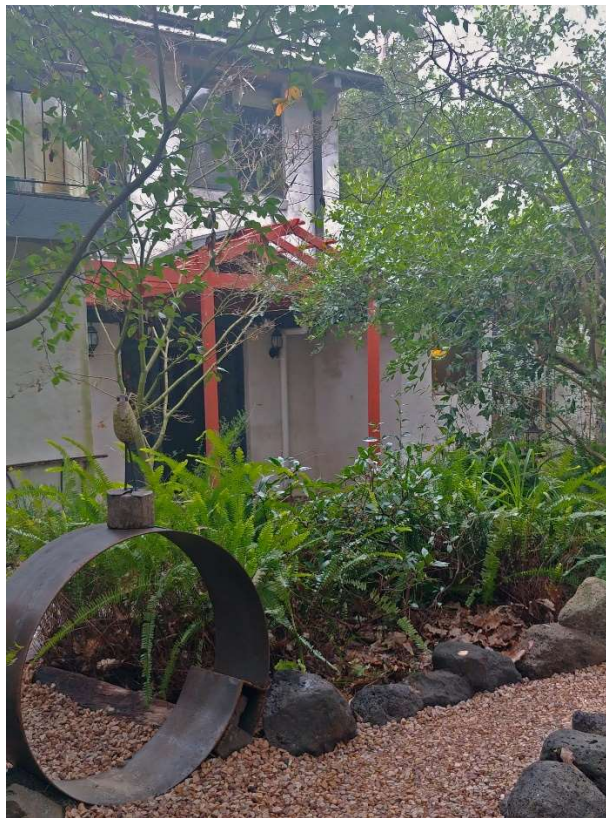
1-May-24



Although this garden was not designed by Edna Walling, it sits at the heart of Bickleigh Vale and compliments the surrounding gardens. It has been developed as a bush garden with native plants in a style consistent with Edna Wallings approach. The plants have mostly been chosen to provide food for wildlife, especially the many species of birds that either live in the garden or regularly visit.

Many small pieces of artwork dotted throughout the garden, from rusty metal to bright and bold.

- Native Garden focussing on grevilleas and correas
- Winding pathways, rock walls and garden sculptures



The garden at Whistlewood was first established in the 1950s following the subdivision of the land from The Barn. Although not designed by Edna Walling as far as we know, the original design – which was still evident in many places – was consistent with her approach.

The garden was overgrown when the current owners, Susan and Fred, purchased the property seven years ago, with some invasive species thriving. This meant we needed to pull ivy out of trees, and rescue camellias from beneath jasmine and generally get weeds under control (a continuing task).

One of our goals for the garden is to extend and improve the habitat for wildlife; mainly birds, but also lizards, frogs, possums, insects and microbats, so plantings over the past seven years have mostly been native plants. As a result, the garden attracts many nectar-eating birds. We have also been working to improve soil quality.



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Two major projects have been undertaken. Six years ago, we redeveloped The Circle Garden, named for the stone circle and surrounding paths. This area was previously lawn. Frog ponds and paths were created, birdbaths added and a tank hidden under a mound of soil adds height. And just this year, the area of stone walls and garden beds along the front boundary has been created with the plantings and a water feature recently added.

Grevilleas, correas, westringias, prostantheras, hakeas, wattles, thryptomeme, melaleucas and native grasses all thrive at Whistlewood where much of the garden environment is dry shade.



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Artwork is integrated into the garden, from a flock of white heron, to rusty or rocky statues. The colourful “mushrooms” made using lampshades echo the concrete mushrooms made by Edna Walling. A mural on the letterbox features birds that regularly visit, and a mural by the front door looks through a “hole in the wall” to Edna Walling and her dog in a wooded garden.

One of the future challenges in the garden will be to ensure the upper tree canopy which contributes significantly to the micro-climate of Bickleigh Vale endures as we lose mature trees. The other will be to choose plants that thrive as the climate changes so birds continue to be nourished.

The Whistlewood garden may seem messy in places, but insects thrive under the leaf litter, as do skinks. We have seen 45 different species of birds in the garden, which includes some one time only vagrants, as well as damselflies and butterflies, and at night the occasional microbat. It is also a garden with nooks and crannies, and secret paths for young children to explore.

