

In My Garden

Annie Hood and Geoff Gosling in Corona

Lockdown

What a terrible start to the year! Terrifying bushfires with all their physical and mental damage along with shutdowns of power, infrastructure and business, followed by drenching rains that flooded some areas and then to cap it off, an epidemic of a disease no-one knows what to do about except to cancel all 'normal' activity and lock us all away – the same technique used in the Middle Ages to combat the plague.

So, what do you do in these circumstances when all normal social discourse is ended? Of course! You attack something that can't fight back – the garden, especially the areas damaged in the bushfires.

We had a couple of areas that particularly needed attention on the north side of house. Each area was about 40 square metres and lightly planted because they both had enormous trees in them.

One area had been covered with *Pittosporum undulatum* when we arrived but over the past four years we have removed all but one of them, exposing a large area. We had already planted part of it out with kangaroo paws that love the spot and send up flower spikes to about two metres tall. Each plant covers an area of up to a metre. So why change to something that may not be as successful?

We have added another 5 kangaroo paws, 6 lomandras, 3 other things and a heap of cuttings of pigface type plants. Before we could do that though, all the weeds that had colonised the area had to be removed. Annie undertook that task over a number of days and cleared all the dichondra which was threatening to choke everything.

The new and existing plants are in amongst some enormous granite boulders that had been dumped in the area without any thought to their placement. Too hard to move them now so the planting has been used to 'tie' the area together and some smaller granite pieces added to keep the theme going. A bit of mulch and the job was complete. Just have to wait for it to mature.

The other area was more public being visible from the road. First task was to remove plants that had been damaged (but not killed) in the fires. We could have waited for them to come back but didn't want them anyway.

Along a north facing wall we have planted *Grevillea* 'peaches and cream' – probably too many but time will tell. A huge granite boulder was moved a foot or so and stood on a different face to show off more of its character. It has made a marked difference. Some smaller granite pieces have been added to further enhance the area.



Following January's fire, many plants were scorched, and needed removal

Other plantings done so far are 3 *Grevillea pinaster* and 6 *Lomandra 'tanika'*. Also in this area are a mixed bag of trees and shrubs. Two viburnum and a sweet pittosporum form a hedged backdrop. That hedge needs a small extension. There are also an *Agonis juniperina* (somewhere between 10 and 15 years old so quite big), two ornamental pears, a liquidamber, a *Callistemon citrinus 'Endeavour'* (which was damaged and cut right back rather than taken out), 3 leptospermum, several correas and a couple of mysteries, and a bit of *Scaevola albida* ground cover. We have also made some lawn repairs where the grass has refused to grow. Again, a bit of mulch and the job is done.

At the moment it all looks great which makes the effort worthwhile and we have high hopes that it will all mature well.



The same area, with damaged plants gone, and new plantings in place. Annie and Geoff worked so hard, even the wheelbarrow needed a lie down