

3rd August 2005

Starting a journal more than two and a half years into our life in the Blue Mountains may seem a little odd - to begin documenting the renovation and subsequent rebirth of our garden 'Mullengandra' in the beautiful mountains village of Leura, but this is where I have to start. Having already carried out most of the cleanup work, removal of the dead and rubbish trees (18 in fact), thickets of holly and cotoneaster and thousands of agapanthus plants, discovering old drystone walls covered with 30 odd years of debris and one of the major building projects - The Pond Garden (linking the two major garden areas) completed, one could be led to wonder, why start now? However yesterday, wandering around the garden feeling rather disgruntled about the lack of rain, I remembered that gardening is a journey. As a story or form of documentation goes, there will always be trials, setbacks and triumphs - a garden like this really doesn't have a beginning of my making and certainly no end that I will see.

So... with it being as dry as it is at the moment, we have no lawns to speak of, and haven't had any since moving here - the water we have is far better used on the garden beds. Verdant lawns are a dream, maybe, for the future.

After being away for a week, pruning roses at 'Alcheringa' (my family home located in the original Mullengandra Village, New South Wales), I returned with three beautiful garden sculptures created by my parents. One, 'The Dragonfly' has found a home in the large pond amongst the Papyrus stumps. How clever to create something so whimsical from a collection of very base metal scraps. I can't wait for December when the Dragonfly will hover over the Japanese Iris and hide amongst the Papyrus.

Yesterday morning, carrying out my daily inspection of the garden, checking the small amount of growth that had occurred while I was away, I couldn't help noticing that the new Crocus 'lawn' was all aspike with its strong new season's growth, and three little purple and white globes with their tangerine stigma standing to attention - only about 117 more to flower! There was also the first of the Daffodils heralding the imminent arrival of Spring, and the first huge blousey pink flower gracing the Camellia reticulata 'Lasca Beauty' (very Hyacinth Bucket) - a flower almost as large as the tiny bush trying to support it. The little Galanthus nivalis under the Hydrangeas have finally shot, almost six weeks after the larger Galanthus elwesii in the winter border appeared, which have now finished flowering for this year.

I am still coming to terms with the restrictions and benefits of gardening with majestic trees, but of course, the biggest hurdle is the lack of water. As I am writing this we are getting a little rain, not like Mum & Dad who have had about 50mm at 'Alcheringa' overnight - still, a little bit is better than nothing.