



An inspirational garden near Melbourne, Australia

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I recently visited a wonderful garden in the Yarra Valley, to the east of Melbourne and came away amazed that a former horse paddock could have been transformed into such a visual delight. [Alowyn Gardens](#) [1] is the work of landscape designer John van der Linde and is designed along strong symmetrical lines.

A 100 metre arbour covered with roses and wisteria leading to a sunken rose garden and a classical fountain at the centre forms the backbone of the garden and there are six clearly defined areas:

- a perennial border
- the forest garden - a silver birch forest with some 500 trees underplanted with hellebores and bulbs
- a formal parterre built along 17th century design principles
- the display gardens, 15 different garden "rooms", some large some quite tiny
- the dry garden planted with Australian native plants and
- the edible garden.

For any kitchen gardener the edible garden cannot fail to inspire. Designed around a central focal point, a large and old elm which was on the property when John bought it, avenues of apples, quinces, limes, crab apples and olives radiate outwards, underplanted with herbs. There is also a berry garden and many beds of organic vegetables, flowers and herbs. The aim of the garden is to be totally organic with companion planting and crop rotation. Animal manures, home-made compost and mushroom compost are used each season to enrich the soil.

As it is autumn in Australia the trees were laden with fruit and walking down the quince avenue the subtle fragrance of the fruit was extraordinary. Beds were overflowing with pumpkin vines and summer's last tomatoes and herbs.

The garden is open every weekend in spring, summer and autumn but is closed over the winter. If you are visiting Melbourne it is well worth the hour's drive out of the city to visit - there is a small cafe for tea, coffee and cake. If I can figure out how to upload more than one image to this blog post I will.

Image (optional):

