The Eden Concept: 
An Exploration of People-Plant Relationships 
To Illumine the Garden Buried Within

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Dedication

There have been so many people throughout this scholarly journey who have shared their time, wit, wisdom and experiences with me and without the benefit of each and every one of them, this thesis would have been depleted.

My first thoughts turn to my family who have all appeared during the creation of this tome. My never ending love and appreciation go firstly to my husband Andy who, apart from the endless reading, re-reading and tactful editing, has supported and encouraged me throughout the process. Without his unwavering love, understanding and support, completing this thesis would have been a lonelier and less agreeable task, so thank you for your support and your belief in me.

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And finally, many thanks to Joan and Peter, my parents-in-law in England for your kindness and hospitality during our research visits.
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Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

.................................................................
Suzanne E Ermert
# Table of Contents

## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

- Impacts of nature .................................................................................................................. 4
  - Research into green connections ...................................................................................... 7
  - Outline of the thesis ........................................................................................................ 9

## CHAPTER 2 – THE GREENERY AND ‘GOODNESS’ OF THE GARDEN WITHIN

- People-Plant relationships .................................................................................................. 12
  - The art and craft of gardens and gardening .................................................................... 13
    - The practical and the spiritual within gardens and gardening .................................... 20
  - The people-plant connection in the history of humankind ............................................. 22
    - The rise and fall of plants ............................................................................................ 26
    - The culture within horticulture ................................................................................... 27
      - Plants in art, literature, architecture & religion ......................................................... 28
      - The sacredness of gardens ......................................................................................... 30
  - Green goodness: the benefits to health through exposure to plants and gardens ......... 34
    - Restorative effects of nature and the green world ..................................................... 34
    - Horticultural therapy ................................................................................................. 36
  - Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... 40

## CHAPTER 3 – ENGLAND – THE EARTH-BOUND GARDEN OF EDEN?

- The popularity of gardens and gardening in England ....................................................... 43
- The English identity ............................................................................................................. 46
- The people-plant connection within English history ........................................................ 48
  - Mother Earth – spirit of Nature ....................................................................................... 48
  - Viriditas – The legacy from Hildegard von Bingen ......................................................... 52
- The veneration of nature and the natural elements ............................................................. 54
  - Sacred springs ............................................................................................................... 54
  - Worshipping the green cathedrals ................................................................................ 56
    - Modern day tree veneration ......................................................................................... 60
    - The Green Man: Nature’s archetype or the face of God? ........................................... 63
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Australia – the wide brown land</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The great southern ‘myth’ – fact or fiction</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australia – a brief foray into its wide, brown expanse</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Climatic challenges</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A brief history of Australian gardens and gardening</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The first Australian settlement gardens</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making a place ‘home’</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Survival or splendour</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gardens of the twentieth century</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Federation garden</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The post-war gardens</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importing invaders</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aqua vitae</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An Australian garden style</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Backyard bliss</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The twenty-first century and beyond: the future of Australian gardens</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oz Nouveau</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5 – METHODOLOGY

The methodology

Defining the population sample

The population and cultures of Australia
Do traditions travel?

National identities

The definition and manifestation of ‘Englishness’
The Aussie battler – a survivalist mentality?

Research population and sample

Why the participants were chosen
How the participants were chosen
Contacting the participants

Components of the research

Methods of data collection and data analysis

Document analysis: gardening publications in Australia and England

Data collection
Background to the analysis of publications
Data analysis of the document analysis

Meeting the participants

The interview process

Interviewing the participant groups

The interviews with the professional participants
The interviews with the ‘lay’ participants
The interview questions
Analysing the interviews

The supplementary data collection booklet

Photo-elicitation: painting a picture with words

Emotions

The photo-elicited emotional response inventory
Analysing the photo-elicitation responses
Image preference ratings
Analysing the image preference ratings data 157
Scale rating statements 157
Analysing the scale rating statements 158
The emotions sphere 159
The arousal matrices 160
Research administration: ethical considerations 163
The plain language statement 163
The consent form 164
Privacy and confidentiality 164
Storage and security of data 164
Conclusion 166

CHAPTER 6 – MAJESTIC OAKS TO SCRIBBLY GUMS: GARDEN & GARDENING
PUBLICATIONS IN ENGLAND AND AUSTRALIA 168
The literature of gardens and gardening 169
Results of the document analysis for English and Australian publications 169
Results of practical publications 171
Results of philosophical publications 172
Conclusion 174

CHAPTER 7 – THE EDEN CONCEPT: OUR GARDEN WITHIN 175
What is a garden? 175
A garden is… 177
...a place of perfection 179
   The plants and plantings of the ‘ideal’ garden 180
   The structure and the hard landscaping of the ‘ideal’ garden 186
...a place of activity 195
...a place of attraction 205
...a place of personal meaning 209
   What does the garden mean to you? 209
   How does the garden make you feel? 213
...a repository for memories 220
...a place for recreation and relaxation 226
CHAPTER 8 – THE GLORY OF GARDENING AND GARDENERS

What is gardening and what makes a gardener? 232

What is a gardener? 234

The life stages of gardeners 234
- The childhood gardener 235
- The homemaker gardener 237
- The retired social gardener 239

How do gardeners view the garden and plants? 240

What is gardening? 243
- Is it the garden or the activity of gardening which evokes emotion? 243
- ...a process of production 250
  - Consumptive production 250
  - Maintenance production 251

What attracts people to gardening? 253

Conclusion 257

CHAPTER 9 – CONCLUSION 258

References 266

Appendices 296
List of Tables

Table 1. A summary of evidence supporting the assertion that contact with nature promotes health and well-being 8

Table 2. Basis of human identification with trees 62

Table 3. Comparison of Average Temperatures and Rainfall for Australia and England 2002-2006 inclusive 97

Table 4. Ancestries within the Australian Population 125

Table 5. Comparison of publications catalogued from 1993 to 2003 in Australia and England with Dewey Decimal numbers 635.9 and 635.09+ 171

Table 6. Types of publications catalogued in Australia and England during 1993-2003 in order of popularity of publication numbers 173

Table 7. The Mean ranking of Australian, English and combined average populations 189

Table 8. Comparison of emotions of the Australian lay participants towards Picture B 194

Table 9. Breakdown of results from Practical and Spiritual concepts into participant groups 197

Table 10. Identifying descriptors of the Emotions Sphere 209

Table 11. External influences behind the emergence of gardeners 234

Table 12. Familial influences behind the emergence of childhood gardeners. Some participants noted more than one influence, e.g. both grandparents 236
# List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Representation of a green man featuring oak leaves</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>A green man ‘spewing’ or ‘swallowing’ the leaves surrounding his face</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>A replica of a carved green man from Lincoln Cathedral</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Carved stone Green Woman surrounded by the revered oak foliage which is either ‘spewing’ from or entering her mouth</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Australian Plant Hardiness Zones</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>Map of population distribution</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>The seven components of the research to discover ‘The Garden Within’</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8</td>
<td>Pictures F and G from the interview booklet illustrating the contrasting features of two gardens</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9</td>
<td>Pages 2 and 3 of the photo-elicited emotional response inventory within the booklet</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10</td>
<td>Page 4 of the photo-elicited emotional response inventory within the booklet showing secondary emotions within primary emotion clusters</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11</td>
<td>Example of the Scale Rating Statement as given to participants</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12</td>
<td>Apter’s Arousal Matrix showing the relationship between levels of arousal and pleasant or unpleasant feelings</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13</td>
<td>The adaptation of Apter’s (1992) diagram to indicate levels of arousal and pleasant or unpleasant feelings</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14</td>
<td>Picture H was the most preferred picture for all participant groups</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15</td>
<td>Pictures D and G were ranked the two least preferred pictures by all</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 16</td>
<td>Most preferred pictures chosen by the Australian lay participants (B) and picture H, chosen by the three remaining groups (AE, EP and EL) as the most preferred picture</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 17</td>
<td>The second choice (picture E) and third choice (picture F) of the Australian lay group</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 18. Scale rating responses from Australian and English participants

Figure 19. Matrix responses of all Australian participants to ‘the garden as a place of activity’

Figure 20. Matrix responses of all English participants to ‘the garden as a place of activity’

Figure 21. Matrix responses of the combined lay participants to ‘the garden as a place of activity’

Figure 22. Matrix responses of the combined professional participants to ‘the garden as a place of activity’.

Figure 23. Matrix responses by all professional participants to ‘the garden as an entity’

Figure 24. Matrix responses by all lay participants to ‘the garden as an entity’

Figure 25. Average responses from Australian and English participants from the Scale rating statement exercise

Figure 26. Responses from Australian and English participants from the Scale rating statement exercises ‘I go into the garden to recharge’ and ‘I see the garden as a place to rest’

Figure 27. Responses from Australian and English participants from the Scale rating statement exercise ‘Gardener’s are born, not bred’

Figure 28. Responses from Australian and English participants from the Scale rating statement exercise Scale ‘Gardens are places for ‘doing’ rather than ‘thinking’, ‘the garden is a practical place’ and ‘I see the garden as a place to work’

Figure 29. Responses from Australian and English participants from the Scale rating statement exercise
List of Abbreviations

ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics
AHC Australian Horticultural Corporation
AHTA American Horticultural Therapy Association
AL Australian Lay participant
AOGS Australia’s Open Garden Scheme
AP Australian Professional participant
AQIS Australian Quarantine Inspection Service
BBC British Broadcasting Corporation
BCE Before Common Era
BNL British National Library
BoM Bureau of Meteorology
CD Compact Disc
CE Common Era
DD Dewey Decimal
DVA Department of Veteran Affairs
EL English Lay participant
EP English Professional participant
HRDC Horticultural Research and Development Corporation
HT Horticultural Therapy
NGIAA Nursery & Garden Industry Association of Australia
NGINA Nursery & Garden Industry NSW & ACT
NGS National Garden Scheme
NIAA Nursery Industry Association of Australia
NLA National Library of Australia
OED Oxford English Dictionary
TAFE Technical and Further Education
Abstract

This thesis explores the connection between people and plants within the space of the garden and the activity of gardening. It focuses on emotional responses of participants, who are drawn from both lay gardeners and horticultural professionals from England and Australia of Anglo-Celtic heritage and explores commonality of desirable garden criteria. It investigates the perceptions of what a garden is, what constitutes and motivates a gardener, and the perception of the effects of the garden to people.

The literature review delves into the vast array of prior research on people-plant relationships and also traces the Anglo-Celtic historical backgrounds of England and colonial Australia. This historical analysis allows for exploration of the mythical basis of people-plant connections of Anglo-Celtic England and colonial Australia and how this impacts on contemporary thoughts and actions within the garden. Eras within Anglo-Celtic English and colonial Australian garden history are also reviewed in order to establish a timeline of styles, preferences and periods of influence to modern gardeners.

The research paradigm is post-positive and works to acknowledge the multiple realities that exist across cultures. It draws on qualitative interpretive methodologies chosen for their ‘rich’ nature of inquiry into experienced emotions in which intuitive skills are seen as legitimate tools of exploration. Data was collected using a combination of a semi-structured personal interview plus the completion of a booklet containing five supporting components: a photo-elicted emotional response inventory, image preference ratings, scale rating statements, emotions sphere, and activity & entity arousal matrices. Qualitative analysis involved thematic exploration across the data sources in ways that sought triangulation. Key concepts from the semi-structured personal interviews were identified using interpretive manual cross-section indexing.

The data revealed a notable connection with nature and gardens for participants from both cultural backgrounds. Depth of connection with gardens is described by the English participants in richer and more philosophical terms when compared to the plain and practical terminology of the Australian participants. Garden design, style and particularly structure dominated Australian thinking over the importance of plant material choice which was favoured by the English participants. Another outcome is that Australian participants more commonly think and describe gardens as places for doing rather than places for being. This finding of increased practicality and preference for structure is ascribed to the beginnings of the Anglo-Celtic colonial settlement within Australia where survival attitudes dominated and the culture of gardening in a dry and arid environment was virtually juxtaposed to the gentle and verdant climate of England so suited to producing a green and generous landscape.

Findings are then discussed in relations to the challenges modern individuals face in relation to personal well being, sense of place and community, and environmental sustainability. This thesis thus redresses a gap in the literature on the importance of the home garden as our most intimate relationship with nature.
If you should one day wander far from here
Into the woods grown long of yesteryear,
Be not afraid of eyes that leer
Through thick embrace of branch appear.

Through thrashing gale and rain and ice
Seek the hidden antlered brow to guide
Your journey’s path, and pass with no mere trice
Than a gentle summer’s day, ever so fine.

Have you brought no gift to place this eve?
No speckled stone, no cup of sweet mead?
No wrap of wool to ease his lonesome keen?
Or thank those true and tender eyes of deep green?

From every tree he awaits with hope so clear,
But those who pass leave no offerings here.
No longer is his spirit thought of or revered.
Alas, forsaken, the Green Man sheds a tear.

-Kathleen Cunningham Guler
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Chapter 1

Introduction to the research

*The garden is a metaphor for life, and gardening is a symbol of the spiritual path*"  
Larry Dossey, MD (1997)

Gardens have been a part of my life since early childhood, although not always consciously so. I grew up on a quarter acre block in a suburb which was formerly farming land, so the soil was good and plants grew well. So, apparently, did the weeds. A strong memory of my younger years is of my parents on their hands and knees on the red plastic kneeling mat, hand-pulling bindii and other lawn weeds to ensure a smooth and attractive lawn to preface the house. At that stage of my life I remember wondering what possessed them to return weekend after weekend to the front lawn and over-generous nature-strip to repeat the process.

As I grew, gardens were a place to play the day away in, to climb trees, to daydream in the dappled shade. It wasn’t until I travelled overseas that I began to question and ponder the attraction to gardens and gardening, and to wonder what it was about gardens that attracted us in huge quantities the world over. One very memorable example
occurred in England when I saw a much cared for climbing plant very carefully
coooned in a greenhouse at Warwick Castle. This climber was the Blue Morning Glory
(*Ipomoea indica*) a very common and highly invasive weed to many Australians, and I
was therefore astonished at the care and attention this plant was receiving in this genteel
English garden. That this climber was being pampered and fertilised introduced the idea
that plants were viewed in different ways in different countries. Gardens were also
treated differently, or so it appeared to me during my travels. These questions remained
dormant until I had the chance to explore it as the topic of this PhD thesis.

These regurgitated memories prompted the research questions which formed the
backbone of this research project. I chose to focus the research on gardens and gardening,
but to also explore the emotions engendered by gardens and gardening, looking at how
residents from England, the ‘garden of the world’ with their very long and established
history, felt about gardens and gardening, and then comparing it to the very much
shorter history of modern Australians with Anglo-Celtic heritage. Would there be a
retained “English” sentiment in second generation Anglo-Celtic Australians?

Therefore, the aim of this PhD thesis was to discover what the Anglo-Celtic/human
connection is to plants, nature and the ‘green’ world and to contribute to the
understanding of the relationship between people and gardens.

Within that scope several research objectives were identified. The first objective was to
identify the emotions elicited by people when viewing gardens. Some of the questions
raised by this objective were to discover people’s emotional responses and to determine
whether these vary because of nationality and knowledge of that subject, such as being a
professional or an interested amateur. Several permutations could arise from this
 grouping of countries and expertise such as old world to new world, expert opinion to
lay opinion, old world expert opinion to new world expert opinion and old world lay
opinion to new world lay opinion. The permutations raised in this question were able to
be applied to many of the following objectives.
Other research objectives identified for exploration were to determine whether there was any commonality in perceived perfection in gardens (were there any perceived ‘perfect’ features of a garden?), what were the perceived attributes of a gardener? (what factors were influential in stimulating an interest in gardening?). The question of gardens being a source of tranquillity was also explored including the discovery of gardeners’ perceptions of how gardens affect our psyche or soul and how the garden makes “us” feel. As part of the objectives it was also felt that the perceptions of gardeners to gardens and gardening should also be explored, as should their perceptions of the need and uses of gardens.

With these objectives in mind, it was decided that my research would focus on the connection between the country perceived as the western world’s ‘garden’, England, and Australia, a colonial offshoot where gardening is popular but has an enormously contrasting climate, geography and topography, and which impact on gardening practices principles and preferences.
Impacts of nature

Human interaction with gardens and green space has been shown to offer the mental and physical ‘recharging’ so necessary for the smooth continuation of our modern ‘juggling-act’ lives (Ulrich, 1983). One can choose how to spend time in a garden, whether for work, relaxation or even meditation. It has its own call to each – minor for some and more powerful to others – yet that call is becoming increasingly important for the health and happiness of the individual and the greater environment. The benefits of interacting with gardens have often appeared one sided with the gardener ‘giving’ and the garden receiving. By connecting with the earth through the garden humankind can ‘receive’ the benefits, such as mental and physical ‘refreshment - something generally taken for granted in generations past and often ignored, or perhaps unrecognised, in generations present.

Research has shown us that contact with nature impacts positively on our well-being, including reductions in cholesterol, blood pressure and stress (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Lewis, 1996; Maller et al, 2005; Ulrich & Parsons, 1990). Maller et al (1995) believe that these benefits “have particular relevance in areas of mental health and cardiovascular disease” (p. 49), which, as claimed by Murray and Lopez (1996) will be the two major diseases of our modern world by the year 2020.

In difficult times, people traditionally turn back to their basic needs – return to their roots – for survival, whether mental or physical (Hicks, 2001). Historically, gardens have soothed tired souls and cured ailments. Physic gardens contained plants and herbs used by the monks for creating concoctions (Dreher, 2003) which sharpened and invigorated dull minds and tired bodies, and provided soothing calm for worries and ills. The garden and the green world have sustained humankind since its creation, throughout the centuries, and continue to do so. Alexander (2002) describes the garden as a ‘spatial Sunday’ – a place to unwind and recharge our batteries. Armstrong (2004) suggests that gardens may need to take on new forms to compete with the modern era, and in these modern times of massive urbanisation and population expansion, our need for nature is
never greater, yet many of us need a gentle prod to re-awaken that buried need to interact again with the soil and plants – to discover what I have termed ‘The Eden Concept’- our personal garden buried within.

So can contact with green nature in the form of a garden unwind our minds or simply unravel our busy schedules? Hartig and Cooper Marcus (2006) suggest that gardens are of great benefit to our health and refer to healing gardens in hospital environments where, although designed initially for patient use, staff and visitors also value these purpose-built gardens to relieve the stress associated with illness. These gardens have been carefully and thoughtfully designed to provide an amenity for both physical and mental healthcare, and as such provide an attractive environment within the hospital or hospice setting.

Specific gardens, such as the Fairy Sparkle Forest Gardens at the Sydney Children’s Hospital Randwick, The John Hunter Children’s Hospital in Newcastle, Orange Base Hospital and Bundaberg Base Hospital, Queensland are designed for the purpose of bringing a green sanctuary within reach of parents, patients and staff “allowing ‘nature to nurture us’ in times of illness, sometimes loss and grief when we need it most” (Sparkle, 2007). The Fairy Gardens are primarily aimed at allowing children – both young and old – to experience the nearness of nature and its green goodness, and to give respite to the patients, carers and others. There are currently five Fairy Sparkle Gardens in operation with another shortly beginning construction. All are brought about by fundraising and sponsorship, thus illustrating the increasing recognition of the importance of a garden for community well being.

Yet when it comes to gardening, ‘instant’ and low maintenance, almost low interaction, practices are often seen as preferred. If this is the case, what damage are we doing to society by promoting the ‘set and forget’ gardens of gravel and yucca?
Is the scene described by Crozier (2003) a modern representation of gardening, with the end result being available without the satisfaction and stimulation of a job done yourself, without your hands tending the soil?

“A phone call to one of the new breed of professional garden designers now servicing those of means will deliver you layout, lawn, plants, planters, the works. And suddenly you will have an instant garden without having to turn a sod yourself. For another financial outlay, someone who only has a first name, perhaps ‘Jim’, can do the ongoing care and cultivation. Indeed, you need never go out into the garden at all for anything other than entertainment and boastful display. One can only surmise what the ‘nth’ degree of this trend will become, perhaps headgear that transports you into a Holodeck garden with optional bouquet simulation?” (2003, p. 82).

From the proliferation of gardening publications, gardening television shows and garden and gardening books we can see that this projection is not the case at present - and hopefully not of the future as well. Conversely, though, Bhatti and Church (2001) observe that the same guides “do suggest that a garden can be quickly bought in pieces from the garden centre and assembled according to expert advice from the media, books or popular magazines” (p. 373).

The importance of green space for the environment is increasingly documented (Mayne-Wilson, 2005), yet gardening in Australia may be under threat with the increasing water restrictions facing many Australian councils plus the advent of oversized dwellings in tree-less settings. Oversized houses known as “McMansions” are appearing in new and essentially vegetation-bare estates, and according to Mayne-Wilson (2005) these modern block-buster dwellings (which have doubled in size while plot sizes have halved) fill most of the standard building block, allowing for a very minimal personal green space.

Computer games inventors appear to feel they have solved the problem of a smaller garden with the invention of a Backyard video game which allows the player to ‘experience’ a virtual back garden (Francis, 1995). These oversized megahomes could, according to some, provide the entire environment for the family under the one roof, eliminating the need for outside pursuits.
The awareness of increasing house size and decreasing personal ‘green space’ has meant that parks, parklands and green corridors are increasingly featuring on Australian residential area building development proposals, both for our pleasure and to ensure the continued survival of native flora and fauna.

**Research into green connections**

Researchers such as Stephen & Rachel Kaplan, Charles Lewis and Roger Ulrich, are just several of the researchers that have investigated the physical and psychological benefits of green views and plant interaction. Table 1 shows the types of research into people-plant relationships that has been undertaken and which supports the health benefits arising from contact with nature. It illustrates some research assertions within the field and the type of evidence (whether anecdotal, theoretical or empirical) confirming the assertion, and of the nine research concepts listed in the table, I would consider seven of those nine to be concerning physiological effects, with one relating to preference and the last being an emotional concept. The fifth concept of ‘the majority of places that people consider favourite or restorative are natural places, and being in these places is recuperative’ is considered to be a combination of physiological and emotional.

As seen, the majority of these concepts focus on the physiological effects of nature while the emotional effects of nature, although often anecdotally accepted that they play an important role to a person’s equanimity, have (in reality) been less researched, particularly with regard to a garden and gardening approach.

Indeed, one area which has been neglected, claim Bhatti and Church (2001), is the area of the lay understandings of nature in relation to the home garden. They acknowledge that

“Gardens and gardening have been neglected areas in social science, despite the relentlessly increasing media coverage, and there is clearly more research to be done into these spaces, which may provide important and distinct insights into contemporary human-nature relations” (p. 381).
**Table 1:** A summary of evidence supporting the assertion that contact with nature promotes health and well-being.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assertion</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Key reference/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are some known beneficial physiological effects that occur when humans encounter, observe or otherwise positively interact with animals, plants, landscapes or wilderness</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>(Friedmann et al., 1983a; Friedmann et al., 1983b; Parsons, 1991; Ulrich, et al., 1991b; Rohde and Kendle, 1994; Beck and Katcher, 1996; Frumkin, 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural environments foster recovery from mental fatigue and are restorative</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>(Furnass, 1979; Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989; Kaplan and Kaplan, 1990; Hartig et al., 1991; Kaplan, 1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are established methods of nature-based therapy (including wilderness, horticultural and animal-assisted therapy among others) that have success healing patients who previously had not responded to treatment</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>(Levinson, 1969; Katcher and Beck, 1983; Beck et al., 1986; Lewis, 1996; Crisp and O’Donnell, 1998; Russell et al., 1999; Fawcett and Gullone, 2001; Pryor, 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When given a choice people prefer natural environments (particularly those with water features, large old trees, intact vegetation or minimal human influence) to urban ones, regardless of nationality or culture</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>(Parsons, 1991; Newell, 1997; Herzog et al., 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The majority of places that people consider favourite or restorative are natural places, and being in these places is recuperative</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>(Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989 Rohde and Kendle, 1994; Korpela and Hartig, 1996; Herzog et al., 1997; Newell, 1997; Herzog et al., 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People have a more positive outlook on life and higher life satisfaction when in proximity to nature (particularly in urban areas)</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>(Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989; Kaplan, 1992a; Lewis, 1996; Leather et al., 1998; Kuo, 2001; Kuo and Sullivan, 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to natural environments enhances the ability to cope with and recover from stress, cope with subsequent stress and recover from illness and injury</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>(Ulrich, 1984; Parsons, 1991; Ulrich et al., 1991b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observing nature can restore concentration and improve productivity</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>(Tennessen and Cimprich, 1995; Leather et al., 1998; Taylor et al., 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having nature in close proximity, or just knowing it exists, is important to people regardless of whether they are regular ‘users’ of it</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>(Kaplan and Kaplan 1989; Cordell et al., 1998)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A, anecdotal; T, theoretical; E, empirical.

(Source: Maller et al, 2005).
Kaplan and Kaplan (1990) concur with Bhatti’s view with their statement that gardens and gardening are topics that are “rich in lore and low in research” (p. 238).

The goal of this thesis is to redress this gap. Through interviews with both lay gardeners and professionals connected to horticulture and the green world, this thesis will make a significant contribution to the amendment of the under-explored area of the home garden.

**Outline of the thesis**

This thesis explores the emotions that are engendered by plants, gardens and importantly, gardening – the very physical act of interacting with plants, nature and soil. It explores whether emotions and feelings evoked are a general worldwide phenomenon or whether they are in a cultural class of their own. Seminal works and programs such as Horticultural Therapy or Therapeutic Horticulture have introduced the idea of the benefits of gardening and the power of plants has been explored with regard to the physiological effects of plants. This thesis, however, serves to increase that awareness. Its aim is to contribute to the field of knowledge of people-plant relationships and to further understand the cultural effects of garden, how the garden is perceived and gardening by exploring the issues from two perspectives, namely:

- an Old-World perspective, England, with its depths of history with nature, landscape and green religions and the strong ‘Eden concept’ in cultural daily life, and
- a modern survival-oriented New-World of Australia, where with water shortages, climatic changes and increasing temperatures, our efforts to garden are severely challenged.

What makes us turn to gardening? Is it that we each have an ‘ideal’ garden which is seen as our ‘Paradise’, our personal Garden of Eden, and is it our attempt to create it in the physical world? Is this persistence to create our paradise garden an innate and almost involuntary response? And what constitutes our ‘ideal’ garden and how does that ideal compare with the style most commonly attempted and repeated in Australian gardens –
the ‘typically English style’ of garden? In this thesis I will attempt to answer these questions, within the parameters of my research questions and within the boundaries of cultural similarities and cultural differences.

To that end this thesis explores early Celtic religions and Pagan practices, Green Men and nature veneration. These centuries old traditions appear to be accepted with a matter-of-fact approach by indigenous British Anglo-Celtic citizens and their comfortable ‘spiritual’ relationship with nature and gardens is refreshing. During the exploration of the emotions and the depths of emotion in a cross cultural aspect, I also investigated whether the spiritual bond the British appear to have with plants had also manifested itself within our New World Australian mindset, or whether it had been diluted, ignored or simply never been recognised in the first place.

These issues will be explored within the following chapters:
Chapter 1 introduces my motivation behind the research and the impacts and benefits that nature has on humankind. It looks at the issues of the instant gratification-type gardens and the effect they may have on people-plant relationships, along with the research that has been undertaken in this field.

Chapter 2 delves deeper into people-plant relationships with an overview of the history of gardens and gardening. It explores the many aspects in which plants, gardens and gardening have featured throughout history and introduces the physiological and psychological benefits associated with nature interaction.

Chapter 3 investigates the tradition of gardens and gardening in England, the “nation of gardeners” (Bhatti & Church, 2004, p.42) and the connection between people and plants within English history from ancient times to the English Landscape Movement and more modern times. It focuses on the early earth-based religions, paganism and ancient Green Men, deities which are now seeing a resurgence of interest. The role of trees within Celtic culture and Druidic lore is also explored, and mythology and storytelling are introduced to illustrate how tradition and culture transcend the centuries.
Chapter 4 discusses the wide, brown land of Australia and its dramatic climatic, geographic and topographic extremes. The history of English colonisation and the ensuing difficulties are explored, as is the establishment of the colony and the history of the early colonial gardens. It traces the history and events that shaped Australia and its gardens, and undertakes to introduce some of the difficulties which have faced gardeners in this country from the first colonial settlers through to the media-influenced gardeners of the twenty-first century.

Chapter 5 features the methodology used within this thesis and introduces the participants, the techniques and components devised for this thesis.

Chapter 6 is the first of three results chapters. This chapter presents the results of a literature analysis undertaken between the English publishing industry and that of the Australian publishing industry over a ten year period from 1993-2003. It introduces some of the hypothesised aspects within the thesis and provides some detail into the realms of horticultural book and magazine publishing.

Chapter 7, The Eden Concept: Our Garden Within is the second of three results chapters and presents the results for the thesis in regard to the question “What is a garden?” It discusses the perceptions and opinions of the participant groups and reveals the effects of tradition and lore upon gardeners with a shared Anglo-Celtic heritage.

Chapter 8 is the final part of the results chapters and presents the findings into the questions “What is gardening and what makes a gardener?” The concepts of gardening as an activity and the profile of what constitutes a gardener were investigated, revealing some very personal definitions and responses from the participant groups. It determines definitions of terms and how these terms are affected by culture and profession.

Chapter 9 concludes this thesis and shows the relevance of the research and its applications to modern day gardeners, educators and those with a stake in the ongoing assessment and improvement of the environment. This chapter also identifies and presents themes and topics which could be richly rewarding topics for future research.
Chapter 2

The greenery and ‘goodness’ of the garden within

“The many great gardens of the world, of literature and poetry, of painting and music, of religions and architecture, all make the point as clear as possible: The soul cannot thrive in the absence of a garden. If you don’t want paradise, you are not human; and if you are not human, you don’t have a soul.”


People-plant relationships

Plants have traditionally fed our body, minds and souls. Their presence can enrich and energise our inner being and their absence can leave us bare. Passion, jealousy and secrecy have all been symbolised by plants and the English language has blossomed and stemmed from a botanical basis, so that we do not feel ‘left out on a limb’ when life isn’t all ‘a bed of roses’. Green gods have formed the basis of our beliefs, hopes and fears.
Wars have proved no barrier for plants to spread their joy into new lands, and currencies have skyrocketed and crashed around them. Fascination overcame fear when early plant hunters braved new frontiers for a unique and undiscovered specimen to include in enlarging botanical collections. And in this modern era, nature has breathed a passion in many to return to an initial green source, to dig through the tangled jungle of our existence to reveal our roots, to find our botanical beginnings. So why does nature touch our soul? Why do green landscapes have the power to quell our fears and stresses? What is this innate connection we have with these silent species whose life-force, like ours, depends on the sun? What is the power of plants?

This connection is not a new phenomenon. From the beginning of history, plants and nature have had an essential bond with our growth and existence; for food, shelter, weapons, beliefs and medicine (Maller et al, 2005; Musgrave & Musgrave, 2000; Zhou, 1995), yet how dependent “humans are on nature for psychological and well-being needs, and what benefits can be gained from interacting with nature are just beginning to be investigated” (Maller et al, 2005, p. 47).

The relationship between people and plants is recognized across the globe and increasingly the information about this phenomenon is expanding. Urban myth supports the idea that gardens are relaxing and refreshing and Thoms (2003) suggests that although the beneficial aspects of nature have been recognised and accepted for centuries, modern thinking has failed to see this because of the “modern-day enthusiasm to focus on the ‘independent’ person” (p. 356).

The art and craft of gardens and gardening

Gardening is the physical and nurturing interaction between a person and the soil, and although public displays of horticultural veneration may have temporarily lifted its image, the more subtle and personal form of domestic gardening has remained in our modern social history. Gardening is the most intimate people-plant relationship (Lewis, 1996) and a gardener is someone in who has immersed themselves within this intimate
relationship, taking it to a deeper level by involving themselves with nurturing, tending and caring for plants. Alexander (2002) describes the gardener as one who “mediates between different orders of culture: soil, after all, is also a culture, a medium in which things grow” (p. 861).

The relationship between people and plants is a symbiotic one, according to Lewis (1996), as the garden benefits from the attentions of the gardener and the gardener benefits from the closeness to this ‘grass roots’ task. Seddon (1997b) likens it to the gardener “acting as a ventriloquist’s dummy” (p. 146) as nature exerts its own agenda. However, it is the chance for the gardener to be at the front line of nurturing by physically getting down into the soil and immediately providing the commitment (Kaplan, 1973), care and ingredients deemed necessary for the plant’s survival, so in a sense there is a form of instant gratification for the gardener which is amplified at a later date when the plant responds in the desired style.

Gardens can be planted in almost any location: balconies, baskets, backyards, riverbanks, roadsides, and even rooftops. They may be created “as a private retreat; a haven from the public world; a setting for creativity; a social place for sharing; a connection to personal history; a reflection of one’s identity; a status symbol; and as a natural world rendered more comprehensible” (Bhatti & Church, 2001, p. 380). The gardeners that tend these ‘private retreats’ are as varied as the many locations where one could build a garden. They come in all shapes, sizes, colours, ages, ability levels, nationalities and financial states. They also come from all areas, whether rural, semi-rural or urban.

Gardens unite people, making them proud of their surroundings. So intense is this pride that the garden can occasionally even lead to conflict. Alexander (2002) notes that the source of conflict between neighbours may be “quite literal [sic] seeds of conflict in the shape of weeds may float over dividing boundaries, sowing dissent between the keeper of a well-kept garden and the owner of a space that has been more abandoned to the vagaries of self-sown plants” (p.868).
Gardens are also considered ‘safe’ places. Security is not the real issue but the garden is a safe area for the gardener in that it is a non-judgemental atmosphere where people can do as they wish for their plants without complaint or criticism from the objects of their attentions. It is an area where people can feel comfortable and confident in their own abilities, regardless of age, education, cultural background or physical abilities. This broaches the area of Horticultural Therapy, and this is discussed in greater depth later in this chapter.

Gardening can be an individual pursuit, a family effort or even a community challenge, and Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) believe “there is probably no single nature-based activity that is so widely shared by the population” (p. 164). In Britain, Dunnett and Qasim (2000) report that private gardens represent the most frequent contact with nature and that “they are the most heavily used type of outdoor space for most people” (p. 40).

Gardening can also mean different things to different people. Dunnett and Qasim (2000) describe it as “an activity and the garden as a place that produces aesthetic, spiritual and psychological benefits that extend well beyond the simple growing of plants” (p. 40). Gardening to one may mean growing fruit and herbs, to another, producing flowers for indoor displays and to a third as a means of experiencing colour, scent and texture. Neuberger (1995, p. 241) refers to it as a way of getting “physical access to one’s environment, to the living world as well as to inanimate/physical nature”.

And gardening doesn’t automatically ensure success. There are many disheartening sides to this hobby: the weather; climatic changes; water restrictions; seasonal changes; pests and diseases; instability of planting materials and microclimates; the physical toll on our bodies and the possibility of expenses. And yet every day people venture out to their garden spaces to spend time and physical proximity with the soil, plants and natural world.

Crozier (2003) suggests that the garden is a realm of possibility “without prescription or proscription”. Or is the garden a place within our world where we can engage with that
tangible world on a personal and physical basis and experience our own place with in it? George Seddon (1997b) eloquently phrases this thought: “In one’s own garden, one is in contact with the whole globe, both cognitively and imaginatively” (p. 165).

Rachel Kaplan (1973) purports that gardening is a powerful source of fascination and that “it appears to possess a great many properties that would tend to enhance fascination” (p. 160). Such properties include the human ability for “informational processes” which she believes humans do well and have an interest in. It also allows the gardener to make choices, control the processes and evaluate throughout. The fact that gardening is based on a nature experience adds to its attraction, as natural experiences are often shown as preferred experiences (Kaplan, Kaplan & Wendt, 1972 cited in Kaplan, 1973).

Kaplan (1973) also claims that the garden is a miniature – “a slice of nature compressed in space and a pattern of information compressed in time. Rarely is so broad a spectrum of nature and natural processes found in so little area. Rarely are so much nature-based action and so full a view of the life cycle so vividly visible and so rapidly completed” (p. 160). Crozier (2003) adds that “Tending the garden is perhaps now no longer so much a place to get lost in but to get found in” (p. 88).

From their study into benefits of private gardens, Dunnett and Qasim (2000) found that age, gender and occupation do contribute, in some extent, to the amount of enjoyment gained by gardeners during gardening. The two major outcomes of this Sheffield-based study were the importance of creating a more beautiful environment to gardeners and the promotion of relaxation. Increased personal satisfaction was also noted in this study, and gardeners felt it was the creation of a ‘neat and tidy garden’ which precipitated this emotion. The creation of a “respectable external image of themselves” (p. 43) was also noted as an important aspect of gardening as gardens (and they particularly mention front gardens) are assessed by passers-by and provide an image of who we are and what we do.
“Gardening” says Evans (1999, p. 4) “is the great vernacular art which connects us directly with the world around us” and is regarded as an “intuitive, explorative and creative activity which contributes to a rich cultural life”. Alexander outlines how we view and use gardens in *The Garden as Occasional Domestic Space* (2002). She describes the garden as an arena “for the contemplative and the spiritual, the productive and the consumer display” (p. 860).

Uses of the garden, according to Alexander include play, such as tennis or badminton, with the size and terrain adding to the unpredictability, and thus the enjoyment, of the game. Another use for the garden, she notes, is for cooking, lending a festive air to the occasion, however in the Western world this domain of outdoor cooking is almost an exclusively male activity. Gardens also provide spaces for production of flowers, fruit, vegetables and herbs. “Today people value home-grown fruit, vegetables and flower [sic] for their freshness, instant availability, and freedom from unwanted sprays and fertilizers” (Mayne-Wilson, 2005, p. 3).

The garden is also a place for dreaming, fantasising and contemplation. “For a culture they are not only places where fantasies might be revealed, but where stories about the way a culture understands itself might be found…Gardens are an expression of a relationship between humans and their world” (Holmes, 1999, p. 152). They can also be an expression of the relationship and memories between familial generations, says Messervy (cited in Mayne-Wilson, 2005, p. 4). Created gardens may establish a link to their past, whether it be imitating a garden from their childhood or just contain elements which have a strong and positive memory to the gardener. Emulating these elements allows the gardener to recapture the “fond memories and emotions of those happy times” (Mayne-Wilson, 2005, p. 4).

Research by Rachel and Stephen Kaplan provides evidence that gardens and gardening can provide a spiritual and restorative experience (Dreher, 2003; Kaplan, 1995), an increased sense of self-worth and self-esteem, as well as the practical satisfaction and function of productive gardening. Some gardening tasks allow the gardener to
completely cut themselves off from immediate stress by involving themselves to a depth where outside thoughts are banished by the amount of concentration given to the task at hand. Because of this human tendency to focus for long periods of time on a single activity, our minds become cognitively fatigued. This leads to “anxiety or stress, irritability with others and an inability to concentrate” (Wolf, 1998, p.1) and is known as “directed attention fatigue”. To combat this fatigue and to restore our bodies, minds and souls, some people attempt to ‘get away from it all’.

Periods of intense focussing, however, can also provide a restful period (Kaplan, 1973) through effortless ‘involuntary attention’. This is the basis behind the process that Kaplan (1990; 1993; 1995) calls “the restorative experience”. Rohde and Kendle (1994) agree that nature can be restorative and add that contact with nature leads to a sense of feeling at one with nature, possibly leading to transcendental experiences.

Gardens and gardening provide a natural balance to our lives (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). Dreher (2003) proposes that the natural human rhythms of life have been supplanted by mechanistic paradigms.

“Instead of recognizing our need for essential rest and renewal, we all too often equate our self-worth with productivity, expecting our bodies and minds to work incessantly, like machines, 24/7. Yet beneath the high-tech, high-stress surface of our lives, we still move by nature’s rhythms and live by nature’s cycles. Unlike machines, we have our own circadian rhythms, daily highs and lows, as well as a very human need for balance, which we ignore at our own peril” (p. 259).

Crozier (2003) reiterates this theme by noting that we are still very dependent on our planet Earth and the pulse of nature which has evolved from it, imprinting itself on our very biological make-up. We cannot exist without these biological cadences even though they are often ignored or overlooked. It is this pulse of nature that sends people into their gardens for the restoration and refreshment of the spirit.

Peace garnered in a garden allows the mind to sift through the problems of the day, yet the ever-increasing high density housing seemingly appearing world-wide may be demolishing the opportunities for people to connect first-hand with nature. In 1978
Huxley (1978) argued that the opportunity to participate in active gardening is diminishing with the preference for concentrated housing, such as apartments, while more recently Mayne-Wilson (2005) wonders whether gardening as we have known it will “survive this and other pressures of modern living” (p. 3).

Maller et al (2005) highlight the notion that “in the last few hundred years, there has been an extraordinary disengagement of humans from the natural environment” (p. 46) and suggest that the underlying cause is the relocation of rural dwellers to the city environments. It is argued by researchers such as Maller et al (2005) that never before has the human race spent “so little time in physical contact with animals and plants” (p. 46) and that “with parks and public nature reserves often their only means of accessing nature, the majority of urban-dwelling individuals may have all but forgotten their connections with the natural world” (p. 46).

It may be argued that each generation has less of a first-hand connection with nature as gardens diminish in size with the dramatic increase of house sizes on only slightly larger blocks. How will the children of future generations view nature and the green world if there are minimal examples of it for them to experience? And how will this lack of authentic experience result in later life if those children have the opportunity to create a garden of their own, as Francis (1995) has shown that childhood memories of gardens and nature are often translated and incorporated into our adult creations. Frighteningly, Francis (1995) describes a ‘best selling’ video game entitled ‘Backyard’ in which participants simulate ‘playing’ in a computerised backyard. This sad, second-hand approach of some children’s ‘virtual’ experiences of nature has resulted in Francis describing the childhood of today as “the childhood of imprisonment” (p.9).

Our first-hand connection with nature is also minimised in the case of high-rises and apartment living, with individual occupants’ gardens often reduced to ‘just-pop-in-the-pot’ potted plants on the balcony or window-sill. Evans (1999, p. 4) suggests that these “instant gratification” gardening practices are “the curse of the age”, are harmful and that many designers “with their instant scratchcard gardens” are gardening for now,
buying in mature trees and instant effects. He recalls a piece of advice imparted to him that spoke of the importance of time to the garden – “Plant as if you’ll live forever” – which illustrates the importance and responsibility that gardens and gardeners hold for the future of the Earth. The significance of gardening, and our understanding of that significance, is therefore very important – wherever we live in the world – as is the continuation of connectedness and, as a result, the refreshment to ourselves received through that connection.

The practical and the spiritual within gardens and gardening

Throughout the research process it has become clear that gardens and gardening are thought of as both ‘spiritual’ and practical concepts. It is therefore important to define the distinctions between these terms clearly. The Macquarie Dictionary defines the term spiritual as

1. “of, pertaining to the spirit or soul as distinguished from the physical nature, standing in a relationship of the spirit, characterised by or suggesting predominance of the spirit” (Macquarie Dictionary, 1996, p. 1687).

And it is this feeling of awe, of your own soul being personally affected by the vision surrounding you that, to me, makes up the ‘other side’ of gardening. When you walk into a grove of trees without any other sound around you, the sheer size and physicality of the trees has an impact on you. The sounds of the winds whispering through the rippling leaves may recall childhood memories. These memories can connect people to places through plant associations which are frequently begun in childhood (Brook, 2003). She asserts that people respond best to their long-established plant friendships. Francis (1987; 1995) also believes that garden memories play an important role in shaping garden meanings by gardeners bringing memories of past gardens into their present gardens. Whatever the memories, there are seldom sad emotions attached to the call of nature and it is these experienced positive emotions which uplift garden visitors.

The practical side of gardening is often the physical side of gardening; the sowing and reaping, maintaining and watering, the weeding, pruning and planting. In each task, the gardener has contact with the soil and plants via their hand and minds. It can also be a
“time out” period for our brains, regenerating through our close association with these living things. Alexander (2002) recognises the differences between these two concepts and highlights this relevant twist to these definitions with her description of the garden as an arena “for the contemplative and the spiritual, the productive and the consumer display” (p. 860).

Apart from the physical undertaking of a garden task, we plot it and plan it – often well in advance as it is a pleasure to ready oneself to it. Lewis (1996) suggests that possibly “more gardening activity occurs in the imagination than in the confines of a garden plot” and that “gardening is almost as much to be enjoyed in the anticipation as in the actual act” (p. 51). Gardening magazines and plant catalogues are to the gardener what chocolate is to the chocoholic – you must have some from here and there, and then more and more, before sitting back to wallow in the pleasure of wading through your hoard.

Lewis (1996) asserts that “the difference between gardening as an activity and gardening as a psychological experience is the difference between what the gardener does and what the gardener feels” (p. 52). He believes that humans have an innate sense of purpose and that gardening fulfils this need of purpose by the very act of caring for plants. Brook (2003) suggests that it is not necessarily just the abstract idea of ‘pristine nature’ (as an outdoors phenomenon) that satisfies our need for nearby nature as a nearby placement of a green plant would satisfy, such as a pot-plant on a desk (Brook, 1992).
The people-plant connection in the history of humankind

“Gardens have been important to most societies worldwide, but their roles as part of a country’s heritage is not always appreciated” writes Mawrey (2006, p. 5). Gilbert (1992) believes gardens to be very important and he states that more biodiversity exists within the average garden than in many areas of countryside.

Although it appears that the importance and connectivity of people to plants, nature, gardens and gardening is known and accepted throughout the globe, the manifestation of this connectivity, however, may be demonstrated differently in different regions and by different cultures. It may be suggested that cultural identity and cultural importance form an integral part of this association with the natural world, and this thesis will explore that suggestion. To begin to understand any cultural connections, it is important to appreciate the history and depth of plant and nature lore, the religious aspects and how these may have permeated humankind to be ‘resurrected’ in modern generations when the need appears (Hicks, 2000).

Plants have sustained the human race from the beginning of our time on earth; trees and shrubs were used to create shelters to protect us from the elements, edible plants were collected for food and nutrition, and when poor health struck, plants and herbs were dispensed to quell illness. Plants protected the human race with the spears and axe handles formed from branches, and fire kept animals at a distance while warming the body. The modern day clothing industry originated with plants when they were found to contain fibres which could be fashioned into cloth (Musgrave & Musgrave, 2000), and used for household applications as well as for clothing the populace.

Aside from the sourcing of plants for food, fibre, security and medicine (Zhou, 1995), a very early role of horticulture was to discover, gather and multiply collections of plants that had this desirable ability to sustain and heal the general populace. This aspect of
primitive horticulture may be described as material functional horticulture (Zhou, 1995) and has been investigated in previous studies. The non-material ‘cultural function’ of horticulture that explores the relationships between people and plants, however, is still relatively novel, and is the focus of this thesis.

Historical research reveals that our association and attraction with gardens reaches back to some of the earliest civilisations. Before the introduction of modern medicine, the garden was the source of herbs and healing. Ancient Egyptian court physicians prescribed “quiet walks through gardens to soothe troubled minds and bodies” (Dreher, 2003, p. 259).

Benedictine monasteries were recognised as the earliest of hospitals and the Benedictine monks cared for the poor, the sick and the weary using both the cool and calm glades from which both the mind and body could benefit as well as the herbs and herbal ministrations from their bounteous gardens. Dreher (2003) makes note of Saint Bernard’s garden at Clairvaux which “was known for the healing quality of its verdant trees and lawns, songbirds, and fragrant herbs, grasses, and flowers, which brought peace and comfort to the distressed” (p. 259). These humble beginnings of modern medicine have not died out but continue in the modern world. As well as the many herbal discoveries that have formed the basis of our modern pharmaceutical preparations and others that are being used successfully in alternative or herbal treatments, the garden or landscape as a healing or therapeutic place is being recognised and increasingly valued.

Horticulture also featured prominently in architecture throughout the ages. Finials, columns and friezes often included examples of plant and leaf designs, such as the Chamaerops humilis, the palmetto, featured in Egyptian decorations around 2800 BCE before later featuring in Minoan, Assyrian and Greek architecture.

The Egyptians appreciated plants for both their aesthetic and production value and gardens were highly prized by the ancient Egyptians. This civilisation was the first
known human race to use gardens for aesthetic purposes as well as food production and
the first record of a garden layout was found buried in the tomb of Meketre, the
chancellor to King Mentuhotep II who reigned c.2000 BCE. It featured sycamore figs
\textit{(Ficus sycomorus)} and a fish pond within a walled garden (Hobhouse, 1997). The
sycamore figs were considered the most sacred of trees as the Egyptians believed it to be
the cosmic tree of life. It was therefore linked to fertility and to the goddess of fertility,
Hathor, who was also venerated as the tree goddess (Hemphill & Hemphill, 1997).

Plants existed for this ancient race in death as well as in life. Tombs have been
discovered with pictograms of fruit, flowers and ornamental plants thought to sustain the
deceased in the journey to the next world, such as the ceiling of the tomb of the Egyptian
Fourth-Dynasty King Snefru which is covered with painted grapevines (Hobhouse,
1997; Lehane, 1977). Hobhouse (1997) suggests that the tomb paintings do not depict
real gardens but

“serve as symbols of the necessary refreshment of the soul on its long journey
through the after life, imitation ‘earthly’ gardens in which fruiting trees and
flowers combine beauty with usefulness as offerings to the gods” (p. 12).

The importance of plants to this ancient race is amply demonstrated by the earliest
known plant hunting expedition, sent by Queen Hatshepsut to collect incense trees from
Somalia in the Eighteenth Dynasty (c.1495 BCE) (Fowler, 2002; Hobhouse, 1997;
Musgrave, Gardener and Musgrave, 1999). Roses were introduced into Egyptian gardens
from Greece and were so highly prized that at one feast in honour of Mark Antony,
Cleopatra ordered the ground carpeted with roses fifty centimetres deep and a net to be
placed over them so they might walk on the scented flowers (Jones, 2006).

The Greek civilisation also used plants and gardens as important cultural inclusions.
Plant symbolism was an important part of Greek society and culture, one example being
the use of the olive branch to denote peace and the offering of peace (Hemphill &
Hemphill, 1997).
Horticultural forms, such as plants and leaves, were also often used in building decoration and ornamentation: Acanthus leaves adorned Corinthian capitals, ivy leaves trailed across friezes and pineapple shaped finials added to the decoration. Lehane (1977, p. 262) attributes this need for decorative foliage as “the perpetuation of summer”, a replacement of the real thing during the cold confinement of the winter months. He also believes that

“the mural is the most convincing means of thus preserving nature’s aspect, for it can fill the field of vision as outside scenes do. So vines of two dimensions can re-create the lush fruits of the autumn, and creepers and climbers in full flower can bring the suggestion of spring to bare, cold walls” (p. 262).

The ancient Roman civilisations also valued gardens, which were termed hortus. Like the modern term of horticulture which can describe many types of gardens and gardening, the ancient Roman hortus varied in size, shape, situation and use. Farrar (1998) states in Ancient Roman Gardens that whilst originally more of a necessity for food production, the Roman gardens later evolved into more decorative areas and domestic gardens gave way to buildings with large public gardens for the citizens to enjoy. She describes the garden statuary and sculptures of bronze, marble, stone or terracotta introduced into gardens by the Romans as well as the frescoes which decorated the Roman garden walls, often supplanting the need for actual statuary should finances be lacking.

Whilst plants were as important to the Romans for food and medicine as in other cultures, the ancient Romans took the use of plants a step further and incorporated their use into their customs and laws. As a sign of secrecy, Roman councillors would hang a rose from the ceiling of the assembly chambers. Anything discussed ‘under the rose’, or sub rosa, was considered confidential and sacred, and was not to be revealed (Ermert, 1997; Hobhouse, 1997). This term is still used in our modern legal world (Stewart, 2001) and in architecture, where the incorporation of the ceiling rose or rosette is thought to be an extension of that ancient symbolic practice (Lehner & Lehner, 1960).
The rise and fall of plants

Plants were fascinating to many throughout history and this fascination transcended both royalty (Adams, 1991) and the common man, provoking the proliferation of “plant hunters” to scour foreign lands for new and exciting specimens. Within England, John Tradescant was despatched to search the New World of America for specimens to be introduced to England, many of which were unseen prior to these expeditions. The Tradescants, both father and son, were sent individually to add to the number of plants cultivated within the British Isles. This was so successful that Hobhouse (1997) claims that Britain now has the largest number of plant species within its shores. Accumulating new specimens was deemed so important that wars could not even halt these plant hunting expeditions. Ships carrying precious cargoes of roses and other exotics were allowed to pass through blockades to reach France and Empress Josephine (Coats, 1977).

In the modern world, tulips are seen as bold yet delicate flowers. These elegant blooms, however, caused a sensation in 1624 when bulb prices reached astronomical heights. So coveted were these bulbs and such passions did they arouse (Dash, 1999) that an entire stock exchange crashed and bulb prices plunged from 5,000 guilders to only a one-hundredth of that amount. Anna Pavord, in her book the Tulip, describes it as a flower that has caused ‘madness’ amongst its devotees and its success from a wildflower to the much-sought after flower of modern times as stemming from anguish, desire, devotion and greed (Pavord, 2000).

Other notable instances concerning plants and industry include the rise of cotton for clothing, the introduction of the anti-malarial compound quinine, the discovery of the use for rubber, and the exotic effects of the Opium poppy within the Asian markets (Musgrave & Musgrave, 2000).
The ways that humans have used and existed with plants, gardens and nature impinges on many parts of our lives, and their practical and aesthetics uses have become intertwined with our human existence. Everyday we see the inclusion of gardens, plants and flowers in our daily lives, and Kaplan (1973) believes that these nature experiences are “a source of important psychological benefits” (p. 145). Spending time in natural environments, such as gardens or woodland, calms and refreshes our minds, and this ‘positive’ phenomenon occurs over a wide range of economic, racial and social boundaries (Lewis, 1995; Lewis, 1996).

Whether as horticultural metaphors in our conversations or as living and growing specimens, we use plants and flowers more often than we probably give credit to. The origins of behaviour and character should be explored and recognised as it may be argued that our human connection with plants plays a role in determining future ‘traits’ and personality (Francis, 1995). Children growing up in Australia are often introduced to plants in games – making the snapdragons ‘snap’, looking for four-leafed clovers, pulling petals from daisies whilst trying to determine if ‘he loves me or loves me not’, decorating our hair in clover or daisy chains and seeing if we like butter by looking for that reflected golden glow from holding a buttercup underneath your chin. All these tiny games and rituals are part of our ever-growing relationship with plants and the earth.

These childhood garden games are not solely Australian, and are also known in other Western countries such as Britain and America. Francis (1995) believes these early memories carry on through our lives to shape our gardens, both within and out.

“Gardens are places of special meaning and memories. For children, gardens are places to develop ideas and attitudes toward the natural and built world. Children carry with them into adolescence and adulthood strong memories and images of favourite childhood gardens. These memories directly shape adult images and attitudes of landscapes, both private and public” (p. 2).

Our thoughts about nature often include images of gardens and plants, and Francis and Hestor (1990) agree that “The garden has long served as a way of thinking about nature
and about culture and how each influences the other” (p. 2). Bhatti and Church (2001) note that although our ‘idea’ of the garden “has changed over time” it is “nearly always linked to our relationship with nature” (p. 369).

**Plants in art, literature, architecture & religion**

As well as inspiring humankind, nature has provided a great wealth of inspiration for artists and writers, and the importance of nature and plants to humans is demonstrated by its inclusion within literature, architecture, music and art. Zhou (1995) describes the garden as an “art to represent the relationship between nature and mankind” (p. 41). Although Zhou’s observation is based in Eastern culture and this thesis focuses on Western gardens and gardening practices, it encompasses what appears to be a worldwide perspective on gardening. Zhou has also allowed us an insight into Eastern gardening by observing that the Chinese style of gardening is compatible with Chinese philosophy and observes an adage from Confucius that: “The wise find pleasure in water, the virtuous find pleasure in hills”. These two features are typical of Chinese style gardens and also feature often in Chinese landscape paintings called *Shan Shui* (mountains and water). The formalised and geometrically designed gardens of Western civilisations were seen as opposites to this philosophy, and represented Humankind’s control over nature and plants. Smit suggests that “a garden is a symbol of man's arrogance; perverting nature to human ends” (1997, p. 8).

“There is competition between nature and art, and what one fails in the other produces” was the view of 12th century Benedictine monk William of Malmesbury on Medieval gardens (Hobhouse, 1997, p. 77). Plants and gardens continue to provide much material for writers, poets and artists, and this shows the continued importance of nature, plants and gardens to our lives. The Victorian era spawned many essays on gardens and gardening, and Victorian fiction included many plant symbols where characters gave and received gifts of flowers with symbolic meaning, lost to modern readers but, as Waters (1995) explains “Victorian writers could work on the supposition that their cultivated readers had some acquaintance with it” (p. 121). As we use floral parlance in our speech today, the Victorians used a formalised floral code; formalised as the
“vocabulary and rules of use were written down, which made it comparatively formalized, and meant that it had to be learned by rather formal means” (Waters, 1995, p. 121). The use of floral Christian names also became fashionable and this practice continues to the modern day, although Angelica, Jasmine, Lily, Marguerite and Rose are currently more frequently heard than Daisy, Violet, Hyacinth and Iris.

Floral connections were also represented pictorially and still life paintings of fruits and flowers feature in art history. Not only were they there to depict beauty, the inclusions of various specimens could speak volumes to the knowing observer. Within the floral ‘language’ roses were symbols of love and peace was depicted with olives, virginity and sinlessness were suggested by the inclusion of lilies, whilst tomatoes implied poison. Great masterpieces featured nature, flowers and foliage, with the Primavera by Sandro Botticelli (c. 1482) being a prime example with its included representations of over one hundred different flowers. The story behind this impassioned painting is the ‘creation’ of Flora:

“aroused to a fiery passion by her beauty, Zephyr, the god of the wind, follows her and forcefully takes her as his wife. Regretting his violence, he transforms her into Flora, his gift gives [sic] her a beautiful garden in which eternal spring reigns…Flora is standing next to Venus and scattering roses, the flowers of the goddess of love” (Web Gallery of Art, 2007).

Poetry also features flowers and nature images and Ovid's Fasti, a poem of the Roman calendar, likens the beginning of spring to the transformation of the nymph Chloris into Flora, the goddess of flowers (Toman (ed.) 1995).

Other examples of the detail of flowers in art include the masterpiece “The Holy Family” by Jan Brueghel the Elder (painted c. 1623) which features

“A magnificent garland of meticulously painted flowers and fruits reflecting the diversity of nature frames the idyllic scene like a triumphal arch. It forms the letter M for Mary, who is seated as in a ‘beszlozzenen garten’ or hortus conclusus dominating the middle ground with the Christ child on her knee” (Web Art Gallery, 2007).

Not even games were exempt from a ‘green’ connection. Floriography was a parlour game played in Victorian times which had its origins in the book illustrations of the
Language of Flowers by Kate Greenaway (1884). Although referred to it by Waters (1998) as “a diversion from the ugliness of urban life and the tedium of humdrum social routines” (p. 119), he rebukes its popularity as an “expression of the impulse to revive a symbolic world picture” (p. 119). He notes the practice of congregations carrying flowers to the Flower Sermons preached by the Rev. W.M. Whitemore which expressed a simplified version of the Tractarian theory that “any object in nature must have a concealed affinity with every other object in nature, lateral correspondence, because all objects form part of the vertical correspondence between nature and God” (Waters, 1998, p. 119).

The sacredness of gardens

As seen from Reverend Whitemore’s Flower Sermons, plant and flowers have featured within the religious arena and this is not confined to more modern times. Trees, plants and nature feature strongly within ancient Celtic and Earth-based religions, and human connectivity has been linked with our innate bond with Mother Nature and the earth. Referring to the nature experience, Lewis (1996) asserts that “a heightened sense of spirituality seems to be inherent in the nature experience; it is as if a gate opens to a deeper self-understanding and sense of connectedness with larger forces in the universe” (p. 110). He also notes that “experience in nature resonates deeply within; it somehow helps to intuit hidden personal pathways that can be explored and appreciated” (p. 110).

Plants and gardens have also been linked to godliness. This is not just limited to the Divine Right of Kings, which describes the link between the Highest Being in Heaven and the Highest Being on Earth (per country), but begins back in the earliest days of history. According to Adams (1991) an important component of a ruler’s education was to study the art of gardening.

Cyrus the Younger of Persia (d. 401 BCE.) had planned the layout for a ‘Paradise Garden’ and also toiled within it, an unusual pastime for one of a gentlemanly bearing. Adams (1991) justifies this as Cyrus
“carrying on the ancient tradition of Eastern kings reaching back to the earliest rulers of Assyria and Babylonia. As the inheritor of those almost forgotten civilizations, Cyrus’s garden-making perpetuated the redeeming Eastern veneration for nature and particularly for trees…For Cyrus the king working in his garden, tree planting was a sacred occupation as well as a symbolic royal gesture” (p.23).

Persian gardens were used for celebration as well as solitude. Colour was chosen carefully as areas surrounding these civilisations were drab and dry. Irrigation channels were a welcome feature in these gardens as a respite from the heat as well as for the sensory soothingness the sound of the running water provided, and this phenomenon is still seen as a popular inclusion in gardens today for the very same reasons. Plants were linked with beliefs, such as the rose which is believed by Muslims to have originated from the sweat of Mohammed, “the first flower rising from a drop of perspiration which fell from the Prophets brow during his heavenly journey” (Davies, 1989, p. 29).

Chinese and Japanese gardens, with their carefully defined landscaped and maintained features, have also been described as trying to “establish a relationship between man and nature, a reconciliation that has been extremely difficult of Westerners to comprehend” (Adams, 1991, p. 208). Zen gardens were valued as they “were intended to conjure up a vision of eternity” (Adams, 1991, p. 238). Although this thesis focuses on the Anglo-Celtic and Australian cultures, it is important to recognise how gardens were considered sacred and valuable the world over.

The basis of early Celtic and earth-based religions within Western culture shows us a centuries-old link between people and plants, and these nature-based religions are thought to form the basis of our innate sense of connection with the earth and nature. The sacredness associated with certain plants was handed down from “generation to generation, belief to belief, and from religion to religion” (Lehner & Lehner, 1960, p. 13). This ‘handing down’ from previous generations has continued the respect held for these plants even in monotheistic Western culture. They also suggest that although “many of the deities of the polytheistic beliefs have vanished from the minds of men, the sacred plants of old are not regarded as mere objects of utility. They
have become the sacred emblems of prophets and saints, and the symbols of religious festivals and holidays” (Lehner & Lehner, 1960, p. 13).

**The heavenly garden**

“There isn’t a religion that doesn’t have either a symbolic plant or plants, or some expression of paradise in terms of a garden so there is a huge link between man and religion, gardens and plants” (Musgrave, *Personal communication* November 2001, Bristol).

Paradise gardens are a popular theme within religion and gardening history, and Persian and other eastern religions held gardens in very high esteem. Alexander (2002) asserts that “the world began [*sic*] and ends with a garden: Eden and Paradise are gardens of inception and finality” (p. 866).

After the conquer of Ctesiphon in 637CE, a carpet made for the Sassanian King Khusrau (531-579CE) was found and greatly admired. The theme of the carpet featured a *paradeisos*, a royal pleasure garden, a representation of a Persian garden; the “abode of the blessed in the Koran” (Thacker, 1997, p. 28). The Paradise garden is considered the ultimate resting place in the Koran. There are promised maids, gate-keepers, soft resting places and running water to sooth both body and mind, removing any possible discomforts from those within its gated boundaries.

The word ‘paradise’ originated from the Persian term *pairidaēza*, the name given to enclosed ancient gardens (Dreher, 2003; Marchitello, 2003). As noted in the quote by Musgrave, the link between gardens and a ‘higher plane’ explicates the veneration many races and religions exhibit towards plants and nature. Outward expressions of this veneration have manifested themselves within literature, art, architecture and music. The pure enjoyment of serenity imparted by a garden was shared by poets and writers. Sir Frances Bacon eloquently captured his thoughts about the garden when he wrote “God Almighty first planted a Garden. And indeed, it is the Purest of Humane pleasures. It is the Greatest Refreshment to the Spirits of Man” (Bacon, 1625). This refreshment still
occurs in our modern times and with the increasing number of houses on smaller building blocks, the need for green space and green ‘refreshment’ needs to be presented to the population as an essential ingredient for healthy living, for mental and physical ‘regeneration’.
Green goodness: the benefits to health through exposure to plants and gardens

“Science has rediscovered what saint and sages realised centuries ago: that renewing our connection with nature can heal us on many levels”


The garden has provided sanctuary and stress-relief to many people for centuries. Dreher (2003) notes that our “agrarian ancestors derived countless benefits as they walked through natural landscapes and performed their farm and garden chores” (p. 259). Harvey (cited in Hobhouse, 1977, p. 88) translates a passage by the Count of Bollstädt, Albertus Magnus, in his 1260 A.D. work De Vegetabilibus et Plantis as

“Pleasure gardens…are in fact mainly designed for the delight of the two senses, viz. sight and smell. Somewhere in the middle provide seats so that men may sit down there to take their repose pleasurably when their senses need refreshment”.

Modern researchers are now cognizant of the many health benefits of gardens. Dunnett and Qasim (2000) observe in their Sheffield based study that “gardens are clearly linked with stress relief” (p. 45) and note that this “assumes particular importance in the city where their value in ‘greening’ the built environment also scored highly” (p. 45).

Restorative effects of nature and the green world

Nature and plants have a restorative effect on people, and Stephen Kaplan (1990) purports that “deeply needed restorative experiences, play an essential role in human functioning” (p.134). Although humans like nature, Stephen Kaplan (1990) feels that humans must accept that we need nature to survive in our busy environments. He states
that nature is “not just a matter of improving one’s mood, rather it is a vital ingredient in healthy human functioning” (p. 141). Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) assert that

“The nervous system seems to be structured in such a way that pleasure and pain tend to inhibit each other; thus the experience of pleasure tends to reduce or eliminate pain. The implications of this property of the nervous system are profound. Because contact with pleasurable stimuli can control pain, it should be possible to confront uncertainty and confusion in environments that are experienced as pleasurable. Further, the experience of pleasure should reduce the need for directed attention. Thus this molecular explanation achieves what is desired at the functional level, namely, that environments that are preferred (and hence experienced as safe) permit resting one’s directed attention. A preferred environment is thus more likely to be a restorative environment. And since nature plays such a powerful role in what is preferred, in general terms, there is a theoretical basis for expecting natural environments to be restorative” (p. 189).

Four main aspects make up the restorative experience:

1. **Being away** – moving or removing oneself into a different environment to allow other thoughts to occur.

2. **Extent** – ensuring the new environment being experienced has “sufficient scope to be explorable and having sufficient coherence or connectedness to be understood” (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1990, p. 242). One example cited by Stephen Kaplan (1989) is of a zoo designed to allow visitors to become totally immersed in the ‘experience’ of the animals’ natural habitats. Extent, however, must also be seen as being a part of a larger whole. Kaplan notes extent is not only limited to a nature setting and gives examples of being totally absorbed in a book or performance as other instances.

3. **Fascination** – this ensures involuntary attention through genuine interest and according to Kaplan and Kaplan (1990) “fascinating things hold ones’ attention rather that drain it” (p. 242). While nature provides “fascination”, it can also be derived from ways of doing things, working things out or challenges.

4. **Compatibility** – all parts need to be compatible, and the environment is a major contributor in accomplishing the restorative experience. An incompatible environment uses substantial directed attention and therefore undermines the restorative process.
“Although the restorative environment is by no means restricted to natural settings, natural environments seem to be particularly restorative. Of particular importance in this context is the role of ‘accessible nature’” (Kaplan S, 1990, p. 138).

Spectacular landscapes can be restorative however the scale of setting appears less important than the proximity (De Vries, Verheij, Groenewegen and Spreeuwenberg, 2003; Kaplan, 1990).

**Horticultural therapy**

Plants and nature impact on our human existence in positive spiritual and psychological ways, giving a calming and restorative effect (Crozier, 2003; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Kaplan, 1995; Relf, 1998; Ulrich & Parsons, 1990). Horticulture and plants also have physiological benefits, such as the decrease in recuperation time after an operation as noted by Ulrich (1984).

Other physiological benefits of horticulture have been identified within the realms of Horticultural Therapy (HT). This domain is the merging of two complementary disciplines to form a non-threatening way for people recuperating from injury or trauma (Davis, 1998) to ‘reconnect’ with everyday tasks as well as their self-esteem, confidence and independence. It uses the innate natural relationship humans have with nature as a medium in which therapy and rehabilitation can be conducted. Neuberger (1995) rationalises HT as having three main educational aspects:

1. Improvement of self-image (including self-affirmation; creativity; initiative.
2. Improvement of awareness and contact (sensory awareness by stimulation; learning cooperation; development of preferences and interests; experiencing happy emotions.
3. Activation of resources (supports healthy parts of the person; regains capabilities). This growing area connects recuperating patients with plants and nature as a means to revive or recover use of their mind and/or body after suffering trauma. The benefits of a connection between people, plants and nature
has been recognised and implemented in the rehabilitation and recuperation process.

Horticultural Therapy first appeared in Egyptian times when court physicians recommended walking in the palace gardens for royalty suffering from mental illnesses (Dreher, 2003; Flagler, 1993; Lewis, 1976). Although used for calming and regenerative purposes, HT did not progress into an accepted treatment until Dr Benjamin Rush, one of the signatories of the American Declaration of Independence and considered to be the first psychiatrist, used horticulture in the treatment of mentally ill patients. His initial studies initiated interest in the field and further research was undertaken in the early 1800’s (Davis, 1998; Dreher, 2003). From the beginning of the nineteenth century until its end, horticultural therapy consisted predominantly of patients being utilised in farm labour, such as fruit and vegetable production.

One of the earliest references to growing flowering plants being an “uplifting” activity for underprivileged children came in the 1896 book *Darkness and Daylight or Lights and Shadows of New York Life* which described how children from the Children’s Aid Society experienced the thrill of growing flowering plants (Davis, 1998). It was in the twentieth century that HT progressed to the important medical field it is today. In 1936 the Association of Occupational Therapists in the UK “formally acknowledged the use of horticulture as a specific treatment for physical and psychiatric disorders” (McDonald, cited in Davis, 1998, p. 7) and in 1942 the Milwaukee Downer College was the first institution to offer a horticulture component as part of an occupational therapy program (Davis, 1995; 1998).

HT further developed in both the USA and the UK throughout the 1960’s and eventually the Society of Horticultural Therapy and Rural Training (later simplified to Horticultural Therapy) was developed in the UK, with the American Horticultural Therapy Association (AHTA) being formed in the US. An offshoot of the AHTA was the People-Plant Council, formed in 1990, which focussed on the area of people-plant interactions and the increasing interest and research in this area (Davis, 1998).
The aim of the AHTA was to improve the quality of life to people via the use of plants and plant related activities. HT is used in a variety of situations including prisons, hospitals and nursing homes, as well as in specific health care facilities, such as those for the visually, developmentally or mentally impaired (Flagler, 1993). It is not only illness which precipitates HT. Participants may be experiencing trauma following either a physical ordeal, such as the after effects of a stroke or the result of a car accident, or a psychological ordeal, such as grief or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The use of Horticultural Therapy (HT) to improve post traumatic situations often results in both a physical and mental recuperation from the trauma, and more hospitals and health care providers now include Horticultural Therapy Programs and gardens as part of their health care facilities.

HT has evolved to the stage where Therapeutic Landscape Design has become an important factor in HT, however Mitrione and Larson (2004) note that the concept of Therapeutic Landscape Design is

“more specific and relates to a particular aspect of a disease or healing process…The Therapeutic Landscape is thus less focused on healing in the spiritual context, and more akin to the disease model of illness as practiced in most allopathic medical systems” (p. 2).

Flagler (1993) notes that participants need not be injured or ill to enjoy HT; it can also be used in activity camps, community centres and urban housing developments. HT also has many benefits to its patients and undertaking an HT program during or post-hospitalisation can help aid the recovery process by developing coping and leisure skills. It can also improve physical well being by exercising and re-utilising damaged or weakened muscles, increasing patient confidence in their physical and mental well-being, stimulating interest, encouraging ongoing treatment, relieving stress and promoting a sense of worth (Hewson, 1994).

The mental ‘time out’ is also beneficial as it is the result of productive but effortless involuntary attention. The wide variety of plants and plant materials available make it particularly ideal for participants with visual impairment, as there are many different textures, scents and tastes in the plant world.
The appeal of HT is that there is no pressure placed on the participant by the plants.

“Plants, whether vegetables, shrubs, or lawns, will react to the nurturing given them. Plants do not discriminate. They respond to proper care whether the person providing water and fertilizer is old or young, black or white, ambulatory or in a wheelchair. The non-threatening nature of plants contributes to their nearly universal appeal. People who grow plants quickly realize a sense of achievement and increased personal confidence, as plants reward their caretakers with new leaves, new flowers, and new fruits” (Flagler, 1993, p. 1)
Conclusion

History tells us that a fascination with plants, gardens, and gardening transcends the centuries. Garden advice bestowed centuries ago is often still valid, as is the case with Pliny the Elder’s (23-79 CE) *Natural History* which encourages the integration of the “rooms of the villa with the ‘rooms’ of the garden and the importance of maintaining harmony between the villa garden and the surrounding landscape” (Wilson, 1992, p. 20).

Our history and future hinge on these green entities; they soothe our minds and our physical ailments, they provide beauty and practicality, they bring shelter, warmth, food and security. Plants have provided their magnificent bounty for human life and living for centuries, although their underlying benefits were often well hidden. The very nature of the benefit to human mental and physical health has now been recognised, and continuing research brings increasing knowledge in this fascinating field. As Lewis (1996, p. 2) asserts

“Green, then, is the colour of renewal and hope, an announcement of life. The actions of humans across the globe will determine whether it will prevail. One thing is certain: The disappearance of living green will foretell not only the end of plants, but of all plant-dependent species on earth, including humankind”.

It is this passion for plants that has inspired my research to delve into the attitudes of gardeners from Anglo-Celtic and Australian backgrounds to discover their perceptions of the role of gardens and gardening, the importance of national identity and whether the attitudes of the ‘ex-mother country’ gardeners had become diluted within those living in the new colonies. This thesis will therefore contribute to the understanding of our relationship with plants, gardens and gardening, their importance to human existence and the effect of migration on the depth of association with the garden and gardening.

There are numerous accounts of the myths and legends of earth religions in Britain, and it is thought these bonds have transgressed the generations to our modern generation so that our earth and nature-bond is an innate part of all humans. In a country such as Britain where the history with earth and Celtic religions is centuries old, ingrained
emotional responses may link back to these early religions. The richness of early English
earth religions and Celtic & pagan practice will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 3.

In comparison, it could be suggested that the colonial Australian culture, having
experienced a ‘disruption’ in the continuity of the nature bond by the very necessary
mechanics of a survival mentality, does not appear to have as deep a connection with
nature and the earth, and that they exhibit their relationship with nature and their gardens
in different ways and with different priorities. Chapter 4 looks at the Australian nation
and culture, the Australian garden and the Australian way of gardening. It also probes
the struggles faced by Australian gardeners to retain and renew a relationship with
traditional Anglo-Celtic mythology in regards to gardens and gardening.
Chapter 3

England – the Earth-bound garden of Eden?

“I have seen landscapes... which, under a particular light,
Made me feel that at any moment a giant
might raise his head over the next ridge.
Nature has that in her which compels us to invent giants;
And only giants will do”.

C.S. Lewis
Of Other Worlds (1966, p. 8)

There is a long and rich tradition of gardens, gardening and grand landscapes in England and the results of centuries of this love of working the soil and moulding the natural landscape may be seen in almost every parish (English Heritage, 2007). It permeates many facets of English characterisation, particularly those of a practical, spiritual, mental and psychological nature. England’s history is intertwined with plants and nature, and from the earliest cultures shows an understanding of plants and their uses. The ability by nature to provide the shelter, food, warmth and weapons necessary for ancient humankind’s physical survival has continued to the modern day, along with many aesthetic qualities for mental survival.

In this chapter I will explore the English culture’s associations with trees, plants and nature, and illustrate the religious and cultural relationships with the early English inhabitants. The aesthetic love of gardens and plants grew from these early
associations with nature, and the evolution of magnificent gardens within England have lead to its reputation as the quintessential garden landscape.

The popularity of gardens and gardening in England

“Our England is a garden” stated Rudyard Kipling in his 1910 poem The Glory of the Garden. This reference indicates how important gardens are as sources of pride, sources of inspiration (Evans, 1999; Vidal, 1999), and sources of enjoyment and satisfaction (Francis & Hestor, 1990). Alexander (2002) emphasizes the importance of gardens to the English by reporting that their planning regulations forbid “the erection of buildings overlooking neighbouring back gardens” (p. 868), reinforcing the notion that an Englishman’s garden is his ‘castle’, his own private space. To some it may seem “the smallest parcel of the world” and then to others “it is the totality of the world” (Foucault, 1986, p. 26).

Lowenthal and Prince (1964) assert that “gardening is more of a passion in England than anywhere else” (p. 341) and that the amount of time spent by the English in their wide variety of outdoor pursuits attests to the depth of attachment by the English to the landscape. Bligh (1973) concurs and asserts that this important “part of British life” (p.3) is most revered in England and “a less personal approach to the art is seen in most other countries”. Sales (1995) names gardening as “Britain’s most accessible art form and one in which we have consistently excelled” (p. 2). One only has to look at the number of premier garden events and shows, such as the annual Chelsea Flower Show and Hampton Court Flower Show, to realise the importance of gardens and gardening to this nation. Three out of four Britons have a garden or outdoor space and according to Vidal (1999) two out of three noted the garden as a hobby, making it the most popular British pastime.

The Chelsea Flower Show, whose official title is the Royal Horticultural Society Show, is held over a four day period and, as Gibson (2002) reports, “is greeted with as much interest and social frisson as Ascot’s meet for the sport of kings”. “Royalty, socialites and millions of other gardening-mad Britons” filter through the 4.4 hectare (10.87 acre) grounds which limits entry to a paltry 155,000 visitors (Gibson, 2002). Exposure to gardens, garden styles, plants and associated paraphernalia through
visiting shows is only one of the schemes aiding the gardening industry. Gardening magazines seem to self propagate but, according to Gibson (2002), it is the slew of TV gardening programs that have really fertilized the market. These garden makeover programs send gardeners rushing to the garden centres the following weekend, only to discover their required plant was also needed by many others and has subsequently ‘sold out’. To some, this influx of common gardeners to the ‘pursuit’ of gardening is alarming. Charles Quest-Ritson, author of The English Garden: A Social History, seemingly concurs when he states that the history of gardens is all about “social aspirations, lifestyle, money and class (Quest-Ritson, cited in Gibson, 2002).

Gardens provide much joy for both inhabitants and visitors to England. Guidebooks and maps illustrate and explicate all manner of garden styles featured in all manner of geographical areas. From the smallest cottage garden attached to a bed-and-breakfast lodging to the grandest palace garden, English tourism has catered to visitors’ garden desires. Some may argue that this compulsion to visit gardens is to imbue oneself in the English ‘way of life’. Palmer (2005) defines tourism as one of the “defining activities of the modern world, shaping the ways in which one relates to and understands self and other, nation and nationness” (p. 8). She also notes that emotional bonds are important because it “helps to underpin and to weld together the more tangible characteristics of nationness such as culture and territory” (2003, p. 427).

Defined by Vidal (1999) as a tourist attraction in themselves, he notes that garden centres are so popular that as many people visit garden centres today as to “all the theme parks and National Trust properties combined”. And the garden centres appear to be ever proliferating in both size and number, becoming an event and destination of their own making. In comparison to the nurseries and garden centres in Australia, England’s nurseries and garden centres are larger and equipped to cater for every customer’s pleasure – and all conveniently contained within a small province-cum-restaurant-cum-resort rolled into one.

Alexander (2002) describes garden centres as fulfilling the role previously held by religion, as “quite the destination” (p. 867) for all to go on a Sunday and that
“located somewhere between going to church and going to the shopping mall, the garden centre provides a focus for the English family bent on an excursion that reinforces familial bonds” (p. 867). Lowenthal and Prince (1964) add that the Sunday jaunt is a ritual, whether undertaken individually or with the family, and that “outdoors is the place to be” (p. 341). And these Sunday jaunts have increased the revenue intake for these quasi-religious ‘chapels’ exponentially. Gibson (2002) reported that the Wyevale Garden Centres chain had doubled its number of stores from 61 to 122 and increased sales by 54% to $242 million within a five year period.

The increase in tourism to gardens and garden centres also benefits institutions like The National Trust who are ‘caretakers’ for many gardens (Hudson & Hudson, 2006; National Trust, 2006). In addition to being caretakers, the National Trust are actively involved in the historic exploration and restoration of older British gardens (Mawrey, 2006), allowing the gardens to be restored as closely to the original design and planting plans as possible for the educational benefit of future visitors.

English Heritage is another association which conserves and protects heritage gardens, parks and estates. The importance of English gardens is indicated in the conception and maintenance, by English Heritage, of the Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England, and which contains over 1450 sites of importance within the register. The categorization and protection of these historic gardens, writes Mawrey (2006) is not a long standing tradition. However, the advent of these conservation societies, such as The National Trust, English Heritage and Historic Gardens Review, whose aims are to increase awareness of the importance of recognising and preserving declining gardens worldwide, shows a new understanding of the importance of garden preservation and is confirmation of the firmly entrenched attachment by the English population to their landscape.
The English identity

The identity of a nation is formed by its historical icons and influences, suggest Tranter and Donoghue (2007), however, these authors have suggested this in relation to the contemporary Australian identity and whether the post-colonial figures “such as convicts and bushrangers comprise an important aspect” (p. 165) of the national identity. In translating this for the English identity, it may be suggested that the close relationship to the land, gardens and gardening that the English population has historically experienced has permeated the national identity and continues throughout the generations, reasserting itself through the popular and seemingly ever-present creation, management and visitations of gardens and gardening paraphernalia.

The English identity has a face and Lowenthal and Prince (1964, p. 324-5) believe England’s face displays a rustic visage in urban areas while putting on its quaint decorative costume in rural sectors.

“Despite war and austerity, income taxes and death duties, parklands still cover much of the English landscape. Their clumps of trees on shaven lawns, stretches of ornamental water, cascades, temples, folly towers, vistas sweeping up to great houses, drives and imposing entrance gates, model villages, and highway diversions are all contrived to create a visual impression…The English landscape is altogether so tamed, trimmed and humanized as to give the impression of a vast ornamental farm, as if the whole of it had been designed for visual pleasure. Hedgerows, stone walls, and roads contain vistas, model contours, reinforce contrasts between textures and colors of adjacent fields, and link contrasting landscapes, as in the Yorkshire Dales, where limestone walls…carry the eye from grassy valley bottom up to untenanted heath and rocky cliff”.

This is the scenery that many identify and associate with England. But is there an identity to be associated with the English population? The image of pride, the British ‘stiff upper lip’ and “a fundamentally decent and moderate Britain” (Bell, 2003, p. 73) is often related when discussing the English personality. According to Fenton (2007) English people are proud to be English but that “Englishness is ‘suppressed’ because of its dominance in the United Kingdom” and he notes Kumar’s assertion which attributes an image of shyness in the English people “because to be otherwise would be impolite and impolitic in a union in which they dominate” (Fenton, 2007, p. 337).
Fenton also suggests there is a “significant element of indifference or disregard for national identity” (2007, p. 335) however he wonders if this is influenced by a young cohort of individuals considered a “non-national generation” (p. 336). Helmreich (2002) however, doesn’t agree with this and sees the garden as not only linking us with history but as “membership within the exclusive club of Englishness” (p. 4). She describes this as cultural nationalism which defines the nation through the sum total of its cultural, geographical and historical profiles (Helmreich, 2002). She also notes that as an enclosed space “devoted to cultivation and display of plants, the garden mirrored the notion of nationhood as a bounded territory designated for a particular set of peoples” (p. 4). This assured and proud (yet understated and reserved) approach is also exhibited in many English gardeners personalities, as well as their gardens, both in design and in the plants used to bring those designs to fruition.
The people-plant connection within English history

The long association the English have with gardens and gardening covers many styles of gardens throughout many centuries. Evans (cited in Vidal, 1999) says the great English tradition of the allotment actually harks back to “a more Celtic, ancient, ramshackle past, reflecting the shared experience of people on the land” thus forming a basis for the long-standing and long-lasting relationship with plants, nature and the green world.

The history of Britain dates back tens of thousands of years, and it is in these early centuries of the Common Era (CE) that the relationship between Albion, as Britain was originally known, and the green world was at its peak. Peopled by a race called the Angles (now known as the English), this tribe dominated the country and the ancient earth religions were the core of their existence. Nature formed the backbone of their births, lives and deaths. It was their calendar and the basis of their beliefs.

Mother Earth – spirit of Nature

According to Sheldrake (1991) a primary meaning of the term nature is “an inborn character or disposition, as in the phrase human nature. This in turn is linked to the idea of nature as an innate impulse or power” (p. 10). He feels it encompasses the natural or physical world as a whole and that the concept of Mother Earth is again on the rise as people feel the need for a connection with the earth through our innate personal experiences of nature and with “the traditional understanding of nature as alive” (Sheldrake, 1991, p. 10).

Metzner (1999) concurs and adds his believe that

“The individual human organism-person is viewed as the created vehicle or form of an immortal spirit or divine being – and so is Earth. The physical planet Earth is the body of a deity living within it, as the human organism is the physical or earth body of a divine being” (pp. 76-77).

Yet modern man seems to have turned a deaf ear to the Mother Earth – much as autistic children to not appear to see or hear their mother’s presence (Metzner, 1999).
“Like them,” continues Metzner (1999) “we have become blind to the psychic presence of the living planet and deaf to its voices and stories that nourished our ancestors in preindustrial societies” (p. 88). Researchers such as Frantz, Mayer, Norton and Rock (2005) agree and argue that humans have separated themselves from nature and the natural world, and as such have destroyed any connectedness.

When the Anglo-Saxons moved into Britain c. 410 CE they brought a new religion with them. Paganism is an ancient earth-based religion which venerates nature spirits and numerous gods and goddesses, some of which we still remember each week on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday (Tiw, Woden, Þunor and Fréo). Paganism is a polytheistic religion revering both the god and goddess. The discovery of mother icons all over Europe, some dating back to 35 000 BCE, suggest the worship of the female deity or goddess, an important being in pagan religion. Paganism is also the root of worship of natural elements, like trees, plants, and it therefore forms the basis of humankind’s connectedness with the green world.

One form of human connection with the green world is manifest in the form of gardening. As such, the background of these earth venerating religions needs investigating to explain the link between many of the traditions and characteristics of these very early earth-based religions which still appear in our modern twenty-first century lives.

Traditional earth-based religions worshipped the spiritual energies and natural settings, whereas the introduction of the Christian monotheism virtually eliminated those early earth religions. The early deities were demonized by the early Christian proponents and altered to represent malevolent icons so as to consolidate the Christian faith’s power by exterminating any form of opposition, although Morrison (2000) reminds us that subscribers to the new Christian religion were formerly pagans themselves. Worshippers of the old ‘earth’ ways were labelled as ‘pagan’. This term describes earth-based or earth-centred religions. It originates from the Latin word *pagus* meaning ‘rural’ or ‘one from the countryside’, however *pagan* (with the lower case p) has since evolved to mean a heathen, an uncivilised and un-Christian person (Jones & Pennick, 1995), and sometimes even one who worships the Devil – an image originating in the Christian religion and represented by a
hoofed and horned being thought to have metamorphosed from Pan “the goat-bodied nature God of the Greeks” (Metzner, 1999, p. 110). Similar deities were also transmuted from goddesses and warriors to witches and demons in an attempt by the Christian church to scare worshippers into following the ‘respected’ and ‘authorised’ religion only.

Jones and Pennick (1995) state that from around the 4th century, the use of the term pagan reverted to an innocent description and meant one who followed a deity or spirit from a specific region or pagus and that the use of the word Pagan (with a capital P) in modern times describes “nature-venerating indigenous spiritual traditions” (p. 1), particularly European traditions. They summarise the Pagan religion as consisting of the following characteristics:

- it recognises a plurality of divine beings
- the female Goddess is the divine principle
- that nature is a manifestation of divinity, not as a ‘fallen’ creation of the latter.

Higginbotham and Higginbotham (2002) believe that the two most central themes of paganism are connectedness – that all things, whether inanimate or animate, are connected over many levels – and blessedness. This latter concept refers to the difference in the pagan religion and non-pagan religions. Where many religions focus on Man and the world as ‘flawed’, being ‘spiritually doomed’ and in need of salvation, paganism beliefs encompass the idea that humans are born with all they need to live “ethically and spiritually, and are naturally oriented toward their own greatest growth and development” (Higginbotham & Higginbotham, 2002, p. 2). It does not suppose to ‘save’ people from themselves, nor does it separate the universe from the human race.

The pagan religion and belief system worked in sympathy with the earth and its cycles. Seasons were worshipped and celebrated, and the creative cycles of work were respected (C Matthews cited in Matthews, 2002b). Nigel Pennick (2001) notes in his work The Pagan Book of Days that within the Celtic seasonal cycle were four important celebrations. The dates of the following events are correct for the Northern Hemisphere celebrations:
**Imbolc (February 1st):**
This festival denoted the end of winter and celebrations banished the coldest season and welcomed the spring and the new life associated with it. With the birth of lambs and calves, fresh milk was once again available to the population. Also known as St Brigid’s Day or Candlemas, Imbolc was the fire festival between Yule and the vernal equinox.

**Beltaine – the spring equinox (May 1st):**
This festival celebrated the waking of the Earth from its winter slumber and the renewal of warmth, life and vegetation to the world after the long winter months. This is one of the major Pagan festivals of the year and signifies “the mystical union, the time when the plant is in full growth and in harmony with the environment” (p. 66). The days following this festival particularly highlight plants, nature and flowers.

**Lughnasa (August 1st):**
This was the first of the harvest festivals and was held in celebration of the ripening grain (MacKillop, 1998). The first corn was cut, baked into a loaf and offered to the goddess in thanksgiving.

**Samain – Summer’s end (November 1st):**
Also known as the Festival of the Dead and All Saints Day, this festival marks the beginning of winter and traditionally bonfires are lit.

It was also the Pagan custom to celebrate the summer and winter solstices (June 21st and December 21st/22nd) and the vernal and autumnal equinoxes (March 20th/21st and September 22nd/23rd).

In fact, there has been a continuing link through the centuries with plants and people which Hemphill and Hemphill (1997) express as a universal belief

“that humans are united with the earth, and that our affinity with plant life is in our genes. The fascinating myths and legends … reflect the close bond between humankind and the earth’s wonderfully abundant array of herbs, flowers, fruit, and trees...Numerous gods and goddesses were connected with vegetation, as early civilizations relied heavily on plant life and agriculture
for their food. The early peoples worshipped the deities who made their crops prosper and their orchards blossom. Magical plants with uncanny effects feature in myths and legends from the earliest days of recorded history, and were used in many cultures in the rituals and practices of magicians, witches, and medicine men” (p. 9).

Viriditas – The legacy from Hildegard von Bingen

Although pagan worship was denigrated and Christianity spurned the commonplace earthy ‘pagan’ heritage, one Christian nun, through her visions from God, brought Papal blessings to an adjacent concept of the connection with the natural world, the concept which she named viriditas. This seemed an almost pagan throwback and Metzner (1999) remarks that Hildegard’s speech was grounded in the common tongue of folk wisdom which he believed harked “back to the natural knowledge of shamanic culture” (p. 62). In the 12th century, Benedictine Abbess Hildegard von Bingen introduced this concept of viriditas to the world. It encompasses the power of nature – “the greening” or “green power” – a creative power bursting to escape from within a created world, bringing forth “life in the world as God generated new things within creation” (Garner, 2005, p. 191). Metzner (1999) in his work Green Psychology – Transforming our relationship to the Earth discusses Hildegard and her concept of viriditas which he describes as “God’s creative power manifest in the created world of nature; it is fruitfulness, growth, and creativity” (p. 58). Hildegard explains it as the relationship that we have with the green landscape, of gardens, of fruit, plants and flowers.

Coming from the classical Latin viridis, meaning green, the word was taken to mean the “fresh green colour” of plants and has been associated with the term ‘vigour’ in relations to humans. Hildegard names Jesus the Greenness Incarnate and describes Mary as the Viridissima Virga, “the greenest of all branches in God’s orchard” (Metzner, 1999, p. 58).

Hildegard used images, symbols and symbolism to connect “ordinary awareness with the experience of the deep, living, organic, archetypal patterns of nature and cosmos” (Metzner, 1999, p. 60). The changes of the seasons, as an analogy to the connection
with God, man and nature is apparent in her fourth vision from her first book *Scivias* (meaning “Know the Ways”) which illuminates her vision of the body being nourished by the soul in the same way that sap nourishes a tree. Hildegard further links man and nature through her comparisons of trees growing, putting

> “forth leaves, flowers, fruits and seeds; and... the obvious, but remarkable, capacity of human beings to grow, to give birth, and to heal. Indeed, an absolute identity is assumed to exist between the *viriditas* of plants and of people” (Sweet, 1999, p. 400).

Indeed, *viriditas* is still recognised today as an essential part of our general health and everyday lives. Dr Carol L. Picard of the Institute for Health Professionals believes health care professionals need to nourish their inner lives by keeping it ‘green’ as part of restorative self-care (Penson *et al* 2000). An example of this would be the inclusion of green nature experiences in our daily lives. As such, Mawrey (2006) points out that “interesting landscapes were created around mental and TB hospitals, for example, as an aspect of the therapeutic function” and that these remnants of functional therapeutic horticulture are “undervalued by health planners and forgotten by most social historians” (p. 5).

*Viriditas* is still an influence on modern lives, and may be seen in a similar light to restorative benefits within people-plant relationships. It does not appear to follow any direction, yet this all encompassing concept involves all aspects of the natural landscape. *Viriditas* is, I believe, linked to our innate garden, our basis of our nature spirituality. Natural scenes affect many people in positive ways, such as the astronauts who demonstrated positive results while viewing nature pictures in a space-station experiment (Rodman & Souvestre, 2004) and these feelings may be based in our garden buried within, the nature portion of our psyche. It is for this reason that I have delved into the past with their natural reverence for nature and the natural spirits.
The veneration of Nature and the natural elements

At the time of the Celts (500 BCE) the English inhabitants did not view nature as an object but as a mystical and living entity (Rudgely, 2004). To them it was something to be worshipped and something that could adjust its form as the occasion demanded. This entity was consulted and deified, and the Celtic connection with nature was a natural and accepted concept.

Sacred springs

One form of sacred, though less well documented, nature veneration by the early Celts in Britain was that of water worship. Green (1992, p. 197) asserts in her Dictionary of Celtic Myth and Legend that whilst all water was considered to possess “a certain sanctity”, springs were regarded as being the most important of the Celtic water cults. She states that springs were alleged to have properties of “purity, heat and sometimes contained curative minerals” and that it was the spontaneity of the spring’s origin from deep below the ground that gave rise to its supernatural status. Shrines were dedicated to various goddesses and some are still the source of sanctuary today, such as the hot springs of Buxton in Derbyshire, which was known in Roman times as Aquae Arnemetiae – the waters of the goddess of the sacred grove (Jones & Pennick, 1995). According to Green (1992) the most important shrine in Britain is that of Sulis Minerva in Bath. Here, she states, the hot spring waters situated by the River Avon pump from the ground an average of a quarter of a million gallons each day.

Wells were also perceived as sacred and were associated with healing. According to Jones and Pennick (1995) each well had its own associated deity which was worshipped. This practice continues through to modern times and is commonly known as well-dressing. Each year in Britain, wells are decorated or ‘dressed’ with plaques made of flowers, stones and other natural materials. A procession carries the flower plaque to the well which is then ‘blessed’ by the local priest in thanks for the community water. These plaques are often made by schoolchildren and the visiting of the wells has become a tradition in England, and particularly in Derbyshire, where
the local tourism offices provide tourists and visitors with a calendar and map of well-dressing sites and the dates of production and processions.

Rivers were often associated as life sources in ancient religions. Many were associated with particular goddesses and would derive their names from the goddess such as Verbeia of the River Wharfe in Yorkshire and Sabrina, the spirit of the Severn River in Gloucestershire (Green, 1992; Ross, 1996). Votive offerings were thrown into rivers and valuable metalwork has been retrieved from British rivers including the Battersea Shield and Waterloo Helmet from the Thames, and a shield and “bronze boar-headed war-trumpet” (Green, 1992, p. 178) from the Witham River in Lincolnshire.

The importance of including water use within religious rites has continued through history to the modern day and Schama (1995) suggests that a good example of the Christian religion’s adoption of the pagan veneration for water is shown in the use within their baptismal rites.

Offerings are still proffered to water goddesses in the twenty first century, if unknowingly, when coins are thrown into fountains or water features and wishes made. It could be argued that this modern day ‘superstition’, plus our fascination with water and water features, is linked to humankind’s pagan past where water sources were seen as sacred and venerated by the population.
"Worshipping the green cathedrals"

Bold sons of earth, that thrust their arms so high,  
As if once more they would invade the sky,  
In such green places the first kings reigned,  
slept in their shades and angels entertained.  
With such old councillors they did advise  
and by frequenting sacred groves, grew wise.

Edmund Waller (1606-1687)  
Excerpt from On St. James’s Park (published 1661)

“Trees are the largest and longest lived life form on terrestrial earth and highly important to the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity” (Nelson, Johnson, Strong and Rudakewich, 2001, p. 315). They are also revered for their grace and stature, whether they stand as a single specimen or in a sacred grove of trees (Witcombe, 2003). They have seen the past and look towards the future, often outliving humans. “The ancient archetype of the Tree of Life pre-dates the Christian myth of the Tree of knowledge in the garden of Eden” (Murray, 1997, p. 17). The tree was upheld as an important icon in many early religions, including with the Christian story of Adam and Eve’s expulsion from the idyllic Garden of Eden.

“Eating the apple from the Tree of Knowledge allowed Adam and Eve to know the difference between good and evil which led to their expulsion from Paradise, where the existence of evil had been unknown to them” (Murray, 1997, p. 17).

Lehane (1977) makes comment of the Iranian world picture that depicts the original man and woman as a single tree and that “their fingers were intertwined like twigs until two souls were breathed into them and they became separate beings” (p. 234).

The Roman author Tacitus (c.2 CE) believed it was wise to listen to the voice of trees “for they tell us much that we might otherwise forget” (cited in Matthews & Worthington, 2003, p. 10). According to Matthews and Worthington (2003), trees are the “stewards of tradition” (p. 10) holding memory and ancient lore within them and
within any artefacts made from them. Frazer (1996) rationalises the worship of trees as perfectly natural “for at the dawn of history Europe was covered with immense primeval forests, in which the scattered clearings must have appeared like islets in an ocean of green” (p. 89).

Many trees have special meanings associated with them. The Oak was the tree most revered by the Celts and the Druids chose it as the symbol of all the importance and function of the summer solstice, the longest day of the year. Although revered as a sacred tree, it still had utilitarian uses and when cut with appropriate ceremony, the bark was used in tanning leather and building (Jordan, 2001). Another sacred tree, the white poplar, is reputedly lucky and contains curative properties (Matthews & Worthington, 2003). Wood from this tree was also used to make shields and was linked to the semi-god Hercules.

The fruit of the hazel tree was known as the ‘food of the gods’ to the Celts and this tree is related to wisdom (Matthews & Worthington, 2003). Hawthorn trees, note Matthews and Worthington (2003) are often found planted near springs or wells to reflect their connection with ancestral wisdom, “to which deep running water has always offered access” (p. 53). Offerings of small scraps of cloth, called clooties, are still to this day tied onto Hawthorn branches in representation of people’s wishes (Jordan, 2001).

Many of the tree names listed above also featured in the Ogham alphabet, a language known to the more learned classes of Celtic people, and most likely the Druids. Ogham featured twenty letters of lines and notches, and each letter has an association with a season and also a tree – the reason for it sometimes being referred to as the tree alphabet (Jordan, 2001; MacKillop, 1998; Matthews & Matthews, 1994; Matthews & Worthington, 2003; Varner, 2006). For example, the equivalent of our roman letter S is called ‘Saille’ in the Ogham language. It is represented by the Willow, has a divinatory meaning of harmony and inspiration, and is written as ᚴ. This secret language used by the druids has been found carved into standing stones throughout Britain (Matthews & Worthington, 2003).
Tree spirit beliefs are thought to be as old as the earliest human civilisations and that the sacred tree groves found in earliest Greek and Roman civilisations were God’s first temples (Quantz, 1897 cited in Sommer, 2003, p. 192). Quantz suggested in 1897 that a person may have a specific emotional attachment with a particular type of tree which can be explained by the ‘Life Tree’, the spirit host of which establishes relationships with humans (cited in Sommer, 2003). From the date of this citation, we can see that the idea of a connection to trees and nature is not new and variations of this theory can still be seen today in tree planting programs which honour a passed life or celebrate a new birth or marriage. The relatives of the deceased or the newborn/newlyweds are encouraged to maintain and nurture their tree, thus creating a bond with it plus a perception that “the fate of the individual and tree, as a green alter ego, are intertwined” (Sommer, 2003, p. 192).

Greek history tells us of philosophers and learned men educating and elucidating within olive groves. Later Greek culture featured a sacred tree – sometimes within a barrier, “with or without an alter beside it”– and this tree is a “universal feature of European sacred culture and indeed it appears throughout Eurasia and Africa” (Jones & Pennick 1995, p. 6). Minoan Crete icons sometimes illustrate a goddess hovering above a single fig or olive tree.

Within the realm of tree worship lies the concept of the Sacred Tree and according to Anderson and Hicks (1990), there are “few cultures in which the Sacred Tree does not figure” (p. 23). The common core is the concept of the tree of life which symbolises paradise. This concept is found in Hindu and Buddhist religions, and was revered by the Greek, Roman and Norse cultures. E.O. James (cited in Anderson & Hicks, 1990, p. 23) suggests that when

“the secret of life was sought in nature, the Sacred Tree was the perfect symbol of its mystery, with its leaves and blossoms and fruit; either shedding its verdure in the autumn only to bring forth afresh is shoots and buds in spring...to typify life everlasting”.

Apart from the tree spanning the worlds, the World Tree, which is found in Hebrew Kabala, Hinduism, and Norse-Germanic mythology, is represented by a large tree in which “every branch and every leaf and flower is connected to the one great tree that constitutes the world” (Metzner, 1999, p. 78). He then makes a comparison of
humans and other living creatures drawing nourishment and strength from the branches, leaves, roots and trunk. Fox (1990) has a similar view of the connection with humans and the natural world, but he sees the human race as but a single leaf on the tree of life which continues to grow despite setbacks, described by him as leaves falling and branches breaking.

“True knowledge of life includes the dark side, the unconscious realms, the dream life, the acceptance of the life-death-life cycle. The tree has been used to symbolize this because it lives in all three realms of reality. Its roots are underground in the darkness, symbolically in the unconscious, the source of enrichment and nourishment”

This symbolism then continues with the crown of the tree as reaching into the cosmos where “it can look down at the trunk and roots and become conscious of itself, like in a spiritual practice” (Murray, 1997, p. 17).

Trees are the largest living organisms that man has regular contact with and to some of the ancient cultures, certain trees must have appeared to have supernatural power as they seemingly ‘died’ in autumn only to be ‘reborn’ again the following spring. Ancient Celtic tribes in Gaul worshipped amongst groves of sacred trees, described as the first temples (Laird, 2003), and their names reflect their veneration: The people of the Elm were known as the Lemovices and the Euburones were the Yew tribe, yew trees being recognised by the ancient Celts as a sacred tree, a symbol of renewal. Worshipping in sacred groves was also practiced by the British Celts (Witcombe, 2003) and Frazer’s (1996) earlier explanation of the large tracts of forests remains valid here. Pagan, or non-Christian religions, were not the sole devotees of trees as, according to Witcombe (2003), the ancient Canaanite religion dedicated to the mother goddess Asherah were also associated with trees.

The Norse culture had the world tree of Yggdrasil to bring unity to their world. The tree as a whole spread itself throughout the many layers that make up the world; the roots were buried

“in the subterranean abyss from which all matter came. Its trunk rose through, and its lower branches supported the disk of the earth. Its topmost branches sprayed out to form the havens, whose clouds were its leaves and whose stars its buds…At the apex of the tree was an eagle, symbolising the air. At its base was a serpent, gnawing at the roots and causing earthquakes and volcanoes on earth…From Yggdrasil’s leaves dropped both rain and honeydew, the food of
bees. So bees, which are people’s souls, were fed by heaven” (Lehane, 1977, p. 234).

MacDermott (2003) also endorses this theory of trees spanning the three earths or worlds – Lower, Middle and Upper – and further expresses the premise that some trees were considered to possess the secret of life by remaining green throughout winter, instead of browning and dying away like other deciduous forms of vegetation during that season.

In the Saxon tongue, tree or treow meant trust or truth, and the depth of people’s belief in the trust and truth of trees was shown by using them as places for making vows and pledges (Matthews & Worthington, 2003). The Magna Carta, a great charter sealed by King John in 1215 which still influences legal processes and procedures centuries later, was supposedly signed under a large Yew tree at Runnymede, which translated, means “a place where the runes were read to foretell the future” (Matthews & Worthington, 2003, p. 11).

**Modern-day tree veneration**

Trees are still celebrated in our modern lives. The best known example of this is erecting and decorating Christmas trees in December. A lesser known tree celebration is the ‘new tradition’ of the Swedish Easter Tree (Hugoson, 2006). Hugoson (2006) describes the new and instant tradition that has become popular over the past decade of decorating trees at Easter time. A similar tree-decorating tradition thought to have originated in Germany is the Egg Tree; branches are brought into the home and decorated with colourful eggs and decorations (Newall, 1967) at varying festival times of the year, including Easter, May Day, Christmas, Whitsun and the Summer Solstice. Another German Egg Tree tradition is the St John’s Tree, which Newall (1967) describes as “decorated with garlands and flowers, and lit with many candles” (p. 43). This event was noted to occur at the time of the Northern Hemisphere’s Summer Solstice.

Although Pâskris, the decorating of birch or willow twigs and branches with colourful ornaments and feathers, is an old tradition in Sweden, the scale of it has recently increased to allow for the community to become involved in the decoration
of an entire tree. Hugoson (2006) believes it is not the decoration that is important, but the feeling of grounding oneself in a tradition which has a stabilising effect on both the individual people and community at large. She also states that it is the stabilising effect which allows this tradition to be instantly acceptable as an established tradition.

It has been suggested that Påskris has its basis in pre-Christian times and Hugoson cites assertions by Hagberg and Nilson that its purpose was to transfer the growth and life energies of the twig to the recipient for protection from illness and evil (Hagberg cited in Hugoson, 2006, p. 76; Nilson cited in Hugoson, 2006, p. 76). A Christian parallel of this custom is the bringing of twigs into the house, symbolising the laying of palm leaves before Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. It could be argued that this expansion of an older pre-Christian tradition is a sign of reversion to a simpler age of natural worship that recognises the spirit of nature as an innate part of every human.

Sommer suggests several theories surrounding the psychological significance of trees within his work Trees and Identity (2003), including:

**The Darwinian approaches.** This concept asserts that open, green, natural, luxurious landscapes are chosen over those that are enclosed, desiccated and constructed. These choices hark back to our ‘learned’ behaviours that these landscapes provided a safer environment. The addition of trees strengthens the preference by increasing the expectation of productiveness and security, and therefore increased chances of human survival. This is also borne out in Orians’s (1986) savanna hypothesis which explains the preference for types of trees that were vital for survival of the early human race and that their appearance in the landscape indicated a possibility of water and food sources (cited in Sommer, 2003, p. 194).

**Depth psychology.** In this concept, trees are perceived as an archetype in the human collective unconscious. Psychoanalyst Carl Jung often used trees to describe the course of human life with genealogy, identity, characteristics and traits, and creative outputs represented by the tree’s roots, trunk, branches and fruits respectively (Metzner, 1981 cited in Sommer, 2003, p. 194).
Ecopsychology. This concept describes how an ecological “self”, independent of the individual self, is developed “through contact with and concern for the natural environment”. Involving oneself in the area of environmental causes is seen as a beneficial “spiritual exercise” and that “planting trees is good for the psyche and for the environment. As the ecological self expands within the person, environmentally destructive consumerist values will lose importance”. Winter (1996) asserts that the goal of ecopsychology is to create a sustainable world

These theories all relate to the concept of identification with trees (and consequently nature). Sommer (2003) adroitly explains this concept in the following table:

**Table 2. Basis of human identification with trees.**

1. Physical and metaphorical resemblance
   Both are vertical, alive, have growth cycles, similarity of parts (canopy = head, trunk = body, branches = arms, roots = feet)

2. Myths and legends
   People created from trees, people turned into trees, tree spirits, sacred groves, haunted forests

3. Intertwined fate
   People dependent upon trees for shelter, fuel, food, building materials, prospect, medicines, shade, aesthetic pleasure, contact with nature, wildlife habitat, children’s play, restorative qualities, seasonal markers, energy conservation, windbreaks, enhanced property\(^a\)
   Trees dependent of people for planting, care, protection, monitoring for disease removal of diseased trees, research, silviculture\(^b\)

\(^a\) Includes benefits for humans during both evolutionary history and in modern times.

\(^b\) Refers to trees near human settlements that need to be planted, maintained, and protected by humans.

(Source: Sommer, 2003)
The Green Man: Nature’s archetype or the face of God?

Apart from the obvious vegetal association in the term ‘green man’, the green may also refer to rebirth and regeneration. The colour green is viewed by the Christian church as the colour associated with “fertility (especially sexuality), paganism and the supernatural” (Doel & Doel, 2001, p. 27). Ballads and verses feature green vegetation within their verses and meanings. Briggs (1977) explains that green was also thought to be the colour of fairies, particularly in Celtic countries, and suggests that this is why green is considered to be unlucky by some.

The human relationship with the green world is a symbiotic one; a spiritual one and a practical one, proffers Matthews (2002a), who believes “the ancient respect for the green is being recovered” (p. 47). Our needs are still met by the green world; our bodies are clothed with fibres sourced from nature, we are fed by grains, fruits and nuts from nature, and medicines from trees, plants and herbs renew our strength and our health when we are sick (Matthews, 2002a).

Our psychological needs are also being catered for by nature and the green world (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1990). In fact, not only have gardens and nature not simply stayed on the physical level, they are intermingled in the spiritual and nature is much revered among Earth religions, such as paganism.

In fact, icons of earth-based religions are reappearing in our garden centres and specialty shops. One of these icons is the green foliate symbol of the green man, and although his image is gaining public notice, he has, in fact, remained a constant element throughout the centuries. The uncertainty of whether they are a pagan or Christian icon sees green men feature in both religious and secular buildings, gates and garden artistry.

Churches are common sites for finding green men. You may find these faces peering from the leafy foliage, as images carved in stone or wood, as a corbel, a roof boss, or even from a church altar. They are not gargoyles, but an archetypal image which dates from c.3000 BCE (Harding, 1998). These are the faces of the green man. They
may look human – some appear humoured, some sad, and some even appear to be in
pain – some resemble wild men or even beasts, and even rarer, in the feminine form
as the green woman. Predominantly, they all feature foliage surrounding their faces –
such as the green man of Norfolk cathedral, who peers from an ornate and intricate
lacework of stone branches – and often have leaves or branches spewing from their
mouths. Anderson and Hicks (1990), however, suggest that instead of the foliage
issuing forth from the mouth, the green man may well be devouring the foliage. Irish,
Pye, Cipa and Hicks (2005) believe there are seven different categories of green
men: branched green men, emerging green men, foliated green men, spewing green
men, transitional green men and wood spirits, May King wood spirits and wood
spirits.

Figure 1. Representation of a green man featuring oak leaves.
Figure 2. A green man ‘spewing’ or ‘swallowing’ the leaves surrounding his face.

Hicks (2006) suggests that the inclusion of the Green Man within church architecture
was probably linked to a “spirit of nature”, a representation of “Divine Immanence,
the omnipresence of God” although this may also be suggestive of a pagan past. And
there appears to be yet another link to the human veneration of nature in the building
of man made forests, in the form of cathedrals and churches, which, apart from their
gargantuan size, include the branched effect of canopies and tree trunks through the
pillars and ceiling structures as part of the architecture (Broderick, 2005; Mullins, 1985). It is therefore possible, asserts Broderick (2005) that including the Green Man carvings into these man-made forests is a symbol of either taming the forest gods or maybe an acknowledgment of their power, as some appear to represent sheer sensuous pleasure.

Figure 3. A replica of a carved green man from Lincoln Cathedral. The original green man face features in the medieval Choir Stalls within Lincoln Cathedral.

Many early cultures appear to have considered the world’s life force as feminine; a Goddess, a Great Mother. According to Crowley (2000) the Great Mother Goddess is often connected to the Green Man, who Crowley names as a very early deity representing “the return of fertility to the land after winter’s bareness” (p. 38). There has been much discussion as to the role of the green man, and little is known of what the foliate head represented in earlier religions. Now recognised as a Spirit of regeneration (Anderson & Hicks, 1990; Crowley, 2000; Curran, 2007; Hicks, 2000; Neasham, 2004), protector of the Great Goddess and, according to Anderson and Hicks (1990) the archetype of oneness with nature, this pre-Christian symbol was incorporated into Christian iconography of rebirth, resurrection, regeneration and renewal.

The Green Man is manifested in Morris Dancing (Neasham, 2004) and his being is associated with Robin Hood, Green George, The Old Man in the Woods, Jack in the Green, The Green Knight (Coulter, 2006; Irish, Pye, Cipa & Hicks, 2005), and older
still Bacchus, Osiris, Dionysus, and (according to Harding, 1998 and Neasham, 2004) Jesus Christ. He may mean many things to many people but one common thread runs though all the disparate imagery and folklore: death and regeneration and the Green and natural forces that encompass all life.

Although his face looks down from buildings that are centuries old, his image is being regenerated and resurrected through recognition from a new generation, perhaps with the need for regeneration of their souls and the need for the attachment to nature that the green man represents (Anderson, 1990; Harding, 1998; Hicks, 2000; Neasham, 2004). This interest in the green world and the need for reattachment, via the Green Man, is exemplified by the swell of books being published in the past few years. The basis of many of these continue to outline the depth of association with nature and the green world by this archetypal figure and how the need and interest in the green world is once again re-emerging (Coulter, 2006; Curran, 2007;; Irish, Pye & Cipa, 2005; Neasham, 2004; Varner, 2006).

Anderson and Hicks name the green man as the archetype of our oneness with the earth, and believes “an archetype will appear in a new form to redress imbalance in society at a particular time when it is needed” (1990, p. 25; MacDermott, 2003). Hicks (2001) states that “the archetype is something functional that helps us live in the world, and …we can’t not live in harmony with nature”. Harding (1998) suggests that our modern day concerns with pollution, desecration of natural resources and global warming are the reason humankind is turning towards this icon of a traditional stability, a greener life, regeneration and rebirth. Anderson and Hicks (1990) likened the resurgence in interest “as though a sleeping archetype was waking up” (p. 17).

Hicks (2001) believes

“the archetype arises because there is a need … and the way this manifests, as it were, in society is that people start reviving customs, people get interested in something, get interested in an image that they feel represents the way we really are. The face connected with leaves – in their heart they feel ‘something about the image which draws me’ [but] they don’t know why”
The archetype’s function is a structure to assist us in life and that the Green Man is an “archetypal idea inherent in our mentality that bonds us to the natural world” (2006). Anderson and Hicks (1990, p. 17) noted that “artists and potters, environmentalists and ecologists, lovers of the arts and writers, deans of cathedrals and vicars of ancient parish churches, leaders of New Age thought and practicing scientists had either already discovered him for themselves” or were becoming aware of him.

The Green Man features in many European cultures, as well as in Indian, Mexican and some Southern American cultures (Harding, 1998) however the most recognisable forms, the foliate heads, are “unknown in civilizations other than those of the Mediterranean basin and North-Western Europe, which are the chief cradles of modern science” (p. 21).

The Green Man has been celebrated in Roman art (Basford, 1978; Hicks, 2000; Millar, 1997), as a carved figure, as wall plaques, roof bosses and corbels, within stained glass church and Cathedral windows, and, less reverentially, on signs naming the presence of an English drinking establishment, although these often appear to relate more to forest workers or Robin Hood. The Green Man also features in both modern and ancient literature and folklore, from the twenty-first century poem by Kathleen Cunningham Guler (2000) featured at the front of this thesis to the much researched Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, a medieval poem by an anonymous author written around 1375-1400 CE. The Epic of Gilgamesh, a tale of the beheading of the Forest Guardian, also features a reference to the green man (Harding, 1998). Documented on eleven stone tablets, this fascinating epic is thought to be the oldest written story on Earth - the earliest Sumerian versions date from as early as the Third dynasty of Ur (2150 BCE-2000 BCE) (Dalley, 1989).

Although many of the figures exist, only one had ever been named. Dated to c.1200 CE, this foliate carving on a fountain basin at the Abbey of Saint-Denis in France had the name ‘Sylvan’ etched into the stone above the face, presumably after the Roman woodland god, Sylvanus (Basford, 1978; Doel & Doel, 2001). In fact, although these sculptural forms are centuries old, it was this lack of naming which led the British folklorist, Lady Julia Raglan, to coin the term ‘green man’ in 1939.
MacDermott (2003) notes that although Lady Raglan’s term is purely British, it is regarded as useful, being a straightforward description of the icon. Folklore suggests that the original name for what we know as the green man was never to be spoken as it brought about evil occurrences (Broderick, 2005).

Green Men are still celebrated in this modern era. Each year in Aston Cantlow, Warwickshire, the Green Man and Lady take part in a marriage to celebrate the Midsummer festival. According to Matthews (2002b) the Green Man and Lady reflect the archetypal figures of the May King and Queen and the Lord and Lady of Summer. Matthews (2002b) also notes the inclusion of Robin Goodfellow, who leads the procession, and the Green Man Morris Team who follow the parade from St John the Baptist Church, which features a fourteenth century carving of a green man (Doel & Doel, 2001; Hicks, 2000; Matthews, 2002b).

Another annual event is Garland Day, celebrated every May 29th in Castleton, Derbyshire. According to Clive Hicks, author of The Green Man: a Field Guide (2000) this ritual has been Christianised although it’s almost certainly older. “The garland King, a man covered in flowers, travels the length of the village and eventually part of his garland is hoisted to the top of the church in a sort of sacrificial gesture. In other words, he’s been killed” (Hicks, 2001).

Green women, on the other hand, are seemingly rarer than green men. Figures and carvings of some green women feature in church architecture and wall plaques, yet it is thought that the Sheila or Sheela-na-gig is the female counterpart to the Green Man. This figure, which is often found above doorways, gives an overt display of her reproductive parts suggesting a
link with fertility and regeneration. It has been suggested that her wanton exhibitionism has left her largely (and purposely) overlooked as she offends the sensibilities of many people with her less than acceptable display.

These forest gods, according to some such as Anderson and Hicks (1990), reside in our innate human core, in our “instinctive symbolism of the soul” (p. 18). They symbolise our connection with nature and the green world. They have been revered for centuries in some cultures, such as in England’s culture. It is possible that this connection with the green gods and green world is manifest through our connection with nature, gardens and gardening. This link to spirituality, therefore, needed to be explored within this thesis to accommodate and define the depth of feeling that was found to be within some gardeners.
The Celts

The Celts were a race of people for whom the Earth held a strong connection. They were responsive to the seasonal cycles and the effects of rotation because of their agricultural and pastoral backgrounds, and many rituals and traditions were associated with their natural surroundings. One important and basic ritual was the ‘marriage’ of the King to the Earth (a young queen). As the King aged, so did his consort (often thought to be the old and barren hag, Cailleach). Being a mortal King, he could not be rejuvenated, as Cailleach was attributed to have the power to do, so the practice of ritual murder or sacrifice at an appropriate time occurred to bring about the rejuvenation of the land by replacing the old and worn with a younger and more energised King. The ritual murder of the old King, and subsequent recognition of a new and younger King, rejuvenated the land and demonstrates again an ongoing cycle of events.

The Celts and the land

The Celtic race had such a connection with the land and the landscape that their most important oaths incorporated these venerated elements and calls them to witness.

If I break faith with you,
May the skies fall upon me,
May the seas drown me,
May the earth rise up and swallow me.

Matthews (1995) describes this oath as calling forth most of the elements of the world; the sky, the earth and the seas (water). To the Celts, the elements were a physical manifestation of the gods and were treated with the utmost respect. This oath is therefore a most serious pledge for the elements to destroy whoever breaks the faith.
So revered were the elements or natural forces, the Celtic race not only lived by their power, but died by it as shown in their four main forms of sacrifice:

- Hanging – death by air
- Drowning – death by water
- Cremation – death by fire
- Buried alive – death by earth

The victims receiving these types of reckonings were often prisoners of war, criminals or outcasts.

The Celts also practiced tree veneration and its importance to this culture is shown by the use of family and clan names that originate from a ‘sylvan’ source; MacDara (son of Oak) and MacCuill (son of Hazel) are just two of many (Matthews & Worthington, 2003). Alder, apple, ash, birch, elm, evergreen, hawthorn, hazel, pine, oak, rowan, thorn, willow and yew are repeatedly mentioned within Celtic tradition and mythology (Broderick, 2005; Matthews & Worthington, 2003).

**Celtic religion**

Apart from their Celtic mythology, the Celts also had a religion that featured in sculpture and rituals. Celtic priests were known as Druids, one that ‘knows’ trees (Matthews, 1995), the etymological root of which (DR) *drus* signifies a tree, often an oak and the second syllable is believed to originate from an Indo-European root word *wid* meaning ‘to know’ (Jordan, 2001), and as such, may indicate an exceptional reverence towards trees (Squire, 2001). Ross (1996, p.59) however queries the assertion that the name Druid comes from the compound *Dervoidos*, “knowledge of the oak” and remarks that “its exact meaning is in question”.

Druids were held in the highest esteem with only Kings and Chiefs ranking above them. Druids were credited with being wizards, healers, mediators, ‘knowers’, historians and scientists, physicians, theologians, divine powers and a repository of wisdom (Ellis, 1994; Matthews, 1995; Squire, 2001). As part of their training they studied astrology, cosmology, physiology, theology and many other branches of learning (Matthews, 1995). They have also been described as seers of great
knowledge (Matthews & Matthews, 1994), whose closeness to the natural world allowed them the honoured position of walking between the humankind and unseen worlds (Matthews, 1995).

Apart from being academically skilled, they also needed practical grounding for disseminating advice on all aspects of every day life, crop care, community law, medical aid and religious intervention. A Druids word was law and although not necessarily priests, they were distinguished differently from others because of their special gifts. As history has suggested that it was against Druidic practice to physically record their tenets, any knowledge of Druidic doctrines may be due to Caesar’s recordings, as the *Commentaries of Julius Caesar* provided nearly all the information about the earliest British inhabitants (Squire, 2001). Ross (1996, p. 24) asserts that Greeks and Romans, who she refers to as “the commentators of the ancient world” made “ethnological observations of the Celtic peoples” which provided an accurate if somewhat limited record.

According to Ross (1996, p.79) the post-Christian literature portrays Druids in the role of “wise men, shape-shifters, shamans, prognosticators” which lack the “dignity, the political power and the religions connotations for their fully pagan predecessors”.

Modern paganism arose from the roots of the old European traditions, reintroducing the ancient sites, rites, rituals and festivals into a form “which is intended to be a living continuation of their original function” (Jones & Pennick, 1995, p. 3). With the world-wide increase in the awareness of the green movement and ecological downfall, there has been a resurgence in the interest of the green world (Anderson & Hicks, 1990; Harding, 1998) and its ‘spirit of place’ (Jones & Pennick, 1995).
Old habits die hard

The Celts and other earth-based religions revered nature and all its glory, and in modern times our reverence to gardens and nature is still apparent. More and more, people appear to be returning to the basic “goodness” of the green world (Hicks, 2001), perhaps for its simplicity and honesty with our human emotions. Gardening is considered a connection with the earth and according to Vidal (1999) it reflects “pluralist personal creeds, lifestyles and new culture needs…in an increasingly wealthy, metropolitan, globalised society…There are powerful organic, wildlife and even religious sub-movements, from Buddhist peace gardens to new age meditation zones”.

Pagan groups in Britain report a rise in membership and attribute this to an increasing need for more care for the environment. Wakefield (2004) notes that the television series Buffy the Vampire Slayer raised the awareness of other religions with Britain, and reputedly brought 9,000 teenagers into Wiccan practices. It also increased the number of people becoming involved in what some would term ‘alternative religions’.

Whilst many of the older style of rituals have become either the realm of the conscious pagan or simply faded into obscurity, our modern twenty-first century has been left with some reminders of this ancient way of life. Reminders of earlier rituals, although seen as minor incidental actions (if recognised at all), are played out all over the world every day by many individuals. Habits and traditions are passed from parent to child, and then down the following generations, often without knowing the reasons behind the actions. According to Simpson and Roud (2000), ‘touching wood’ is the archetypal superstition in modern England, and an action carried out by even the non-superstitious to protect oneself after tempting fate. They suggest that this belief harks back to tree worship and the desired protection by tree spirits but also offer the alternative rationalization that touching wood may invoke the protection of Jesus Christ because the cross was made of wood. Many habits and superstitions from early Celtic and Pagan tradition have been absorbed and adopted into the modern world, predominated by the Christian religion, and, over time, their ancient roots have become blurred.
One of the major festivals of the year is Yule or Christmas. Each year many trees are erected and dressed in baubles, tinsel and beads. The advent of this tradition is commonly attributed to Queen Victoria’s husband, Prince Albert, however it is now believed that since the time of Princess Charlotte of Mecklenberg Strelitz, who became the wife of George III in 1761, the British royal family regularly featured Christmas trees in their Christmas festivities and that Victoria would therefore have been familiar with them (Simpson and Roud, 2000). It is, however, a pagan tradition to bring a bough into the house during the cold winter to keep the tree spirits warm with the decorations being offerings to the deities. The twelve days of Christmas are believed to be directly linked back to the pagan Yule festival which began on mother night and ended twelve days later. Holly and mistletoe had fertility origins, and mistletoe was considered very sacred by the Druids, who called it the golden bough (Frazer, 1996).

Easter is another Christianised pagan tradition that is celebrated annually in many countries around the world. Easter gained its name from Eostre, the Anglo-Saxon translation of the German goddess Ostara. The goddess Eostre was the Goddess of Spring, the Green Earth and Fertility and coloured eggs were purportedly given to the goddess by a small hare, another pagan symbol of Eostre (Higginbotham & Higginbotham, 2002). Thus began the tradition of Eostre eggs and the Eostre bunny.

Valentines Day, Halloween and the preference for June weddings are also traditions that have evolved from ancient pagan celebrations.

These examples illustrate the way the ‘old’ myths and legends of our cultural past linger into our modern cultural expressions, entrenching themselves into modern-day celebrations without a clear link to the origin of the celebration.

**The use of mythology and legend in determining the past**

We are able to place these interesting cultural aspects of human civilisation into the modern era by delving into historical accounts or researching folklore. Throughout history and throughout all cultures, stories of past achievements and events linger and are passed on to new ears in the form of myths. Without myth and legend,
aspects of ancient daily life, cultural aspects, triumphs and tribulations would have been permanently erased from our modern knowledge. To some they may appear to be fictional pieces, however storytelling is accepted as an important part of historical reference due to the fact that some cultures did not physically record these events.

With further research, some myths, though previously regarded as fictional, have indeed proved to be of a historical and factual basis. Neeson (1998) defines myths as “a repository of the self-image of a people” providing “a revealing, even authoritative, blue-print of former human outlook and man’s early search for truth” (p. 9). He believes a simple definition of the term mythology is impossible, but considers the concept as “created by mankind to give shape and meaning to otherwise inexplicable wonders and unseen gods” (p. 10-11). Our modern interpretation of mythology is corrupted by our rigid need and adherence for proven and recorded scientific fact, rather than our inherent lack of belief in our forefathers abilities to faithfully record occurrences of their times.

In some instances it is other cultures that have recorded events concerning another race. “Practically all their information concerning the ancient inhabitants of Britain was taken from the Commentaries of Julius Caesar” (Squire, 2001, p. 18). And as Neeson (1998, p. 11) observes “Unlike history, mythology does not purport to provide concrete answers. On the other hand where else should one look to know what the peoples of past civilisations believed?”

**Storytellers or Fairytalers?**

One way the history of a culture was passed down through the generations was in the form of narrative and legend. These ‘re-tellings’ have also been referred to as myths, yet this decries the importance of the account as myths are often interpreted as a fictional fancy or a tale for children. Even the Macquarie Dictionary defines the word myth as

“1. a traditional story, usually concerning some superhuman being or some alleged person or event, and which attempts to explain natural phenomena; especially a traditional story about deities or demigods and the creation of the world and its inhabitants…3. any invented story” (2005, p. 948).
In its role of “a traditional story” (Macquarie, 2005, p. 948), however, myths can provide insights into the cultural, religion, social, biological and natural aspects of a race.

Historians, archaeologists and ethnologists now examine myths in a new light since the actual discovery of Homer’s ‘mythical’ city of Troy by Heinrich Schliemann in the late 1800’s. Squire (2001, p. 15, p.) confirms that

“Elaborate poems and sagas are not made in a day, or in a year…The bard who first put them into artistic shape was setting down the primitive traditions of his race. We may therefore venture to describe them as not of the twelfth century or of the seventh, but as of a prehistoric and immemorial antiquity”.

Bowman (2004) describes myths as significant stories or a belief story, and reiterates Bennett’s opinions that these informal stories

“illustrate current community beliefs…[they] tell not only of personal experiences, but also of those that have happened to other people…and are used to explore and validate the belief traditions of a given community by showing how experience matches expectations” (Bennett, 1989, p. 291).

The actual event at the core of the legend or myth may occur much earlier than the first appearance of stories or verses. And although there is a tendency for embellishment, there is an “‘inner core’ of primeval thought” aligning them with other cultures and that “their ‘local colour’ may be that of their last ‘editor’, but their ‘plots’ are pre-mediaeval, pre-Christian, pre-historic” (Squire, 2001, p. 16).

Myth and ‘magic’ have become anathema in modern society and this is partially explained by Schama (1995) as a measurement of humankind’s evolutionary progression which was gauged “by the degree to which it had cast off the myth and magic of primitive religion” (p. 208).

**The seeds of garden literature and art**

Modern day myth can still be conceived in the form of painting and prose, and the garden and nature featured strongly in English literature and published works.
Nature inspired many creative talents and examples of this were in the many poems and novels written about nature, gardens and gardening. Shakespeare added many references to nature within his works and Andrews (2001) notes that characters wrestling with problems often fled into a natural setting, returning with their lives ‘transformed’ by the experience with nature. He suggests this is an example of the Elizabethan longing felt by the citizens of London for nature which symbolised simplicity and innocence for them. It is the same longing for simplicity in our modern era that also sends citizens into the natural arena for a recuperative experience with nature (Kaplan, 1990; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1990).

Poetry and prose were popular with natural and “flowery” themes, and again symbolised simplicity and innocence of a more rural aspect and age. Some examples are The Lily by William Blake, With a flower by Emily Dickinson and William Wordsworth’s classic poem I wandered lonely as a cloud which features “a host of golden daffodils”. Many poets wrote works about the garden, such as The Garden by Andrew Marvell, The Garden by James Shirley, and Alexander Pope’s The Garden. Could these, perhaps, have been the equivalent of the modern ‘Clayton’s’ gardening – the time you have with the garden and nature when you are not actually having time in the garden?
The ages of the English garden

English gardens have existed from earliest times through to the modern day, with varying fashions for designers and styles featuring within that period. Some of these fashions and designers have influenced gardens and gardeners abroad as well as within England (Hyams, 1966), where the truly English style of garden was established. Because the history is long and complex, and the wealth of material overwhelming, I have chosen to present only a brief overview of the fashions and several of the influential designers of the times to illustrate just a small example of the many differing styles and periods within English garden history. While not comprehensive, this review does illustrate the length, depth and breadth of English garden history for comparison with Australia’s short and struggling history of landscaping the ‘new country’ and to reinforce England’s long connection with nature and the green world – something which continues today.

Early English gardens

From the ancient Celtic period, England’s landscapes have developed through differing periods and differing garden styles. Primarily gardens were kept for the utilitarian purposes of growing medicinal herbs, cooking herbs and vegetables.

Medicinal herbs were vital for survival and health, but culinary herbs were also important ingredients as they concealed unsavoury flavours from bad or poorly preserved food. The ingestion of herbs, although perhaps unknowingly, provided some protection from vitamin deficiency and related diseases such as scurvy (Huxley, 1978).

Although originating as a purposeful part of human survival, gardens evolved into social and symbolic areas for enjoyment. Modern gardens are used for individual and public enjoyment. Changes in the way we live and the styles in which we live all reflect on the size, style and uses of gardens and green spaces.
The medieval garden – 800 CE

“In the medieval garden the best productions of wild nature were concentrated and enhanced through husbandry and horticulture” (Rogers, 2001). The ingestion of even small amounts of these edible ‘best productions’ was beneficial to the medieval diet as only small portions of vegetables and some fruit were consumed with meat, fish and birds predominating (Huxley, 1978). Medicinal herbs had been regarded as important for health, magic and ritual for centuries, and they were also an important inclusion to the medieval garden – “if a medieval castle had no other plot within its walls, there would be one for herbs” (Huxley, 1978, p. 15).

Medieval gardens, however, were seen as more than a place to grow food or medicines; they were considered ‘earthly’ paradise parks (Rogers, 2001) and pleasure gardens. These represented more than the physical side of a garden, they “embodied a rich symbolic significance in religious terms as well as representing the pagan ‘lovely place’” (Hobhouse, 1997, p. 78).

Popular features of medieval gardens were the square enclosed shapes and these were associated with the Virgin Mary who is often depicted in paintings within a garden enclosed by a wall (Thacker, 1997). Within the garden would be geometrically shaped garden beds, hedges and trellises, and grass. One interesting use of the grass was in the formation of turf seats which were raised banks for seating placed around a tree or adjacent to a wall. Trees and flower beds also featured, but another curious addition was the mount, or a small hill, “a vantage point from which the attraction of the garden might be seen and where a summer-house or arbour might be built” (Thacker, 1997, p. 85). These types of ornamental gardens, however, were not common for those outside the aristocracy and most remained productive gardens.

Heavenly horticulture – the monastery garden

During the Middle Ages (1154-1485 CE) self-sufficient religious communities were cloistered within monastery walls. These religious communities gardened for food and in the later Middle Ages, included “curative” plantings (Hobhouse, 2002, p. 110). Monks tended these gardens (Hobhouse, 2002), which were generally a mixture of
vegetables, fruit orchards and beds of both culinary and medicinal herbs (Huxley, 1978). Hildegard von Bingen divided her monastery garden into three sections: ornamental plants which included roses, violets and irises and would have been used for altar decoration, useful plants such as the food and medicinal specimens and wild plants (Hobhouse, 2002). Some European monasteries also kept vineyards, producing such intoxicating tipples as Benedictine and Chartreuse liqueurs, which are still known and sold in the twenty first century.

Monastery gardens played an important role in the preservation of plant species and plant varieties, and ancient horticultural practices were also maintained within their walls (Huxley, 1978). Hobhouse (2002) notes that generally the monks were not specialised in botanical knowledge apart from the age-old practices handed down from previous generations. The apothecaries garden was a more elaborate garden with more plant varieties grown for use in distillation “where tinctures, cordials, oils, ‘waters’, syrups, powders and ointments could be prepared” (Huxley, 1978, p. 24).

“Healing by the act of gardening or by being in a beautiful place is not a modern idea” states Hobhouse, 2002, p. 113). Medieval monks recognised the benefits of nature to both the body and the mind, and St Benedict ordered that his monasteries should include gardens and water, and the monks would toil in the garden as part of their spiritual dedication.

According to Landsberg (1995) there was no set English style of gardening at this point in history because the definition of nationhood was quite fluid. And although she alludes to an increase in the varieties of garden plants featured within the gardens, she considers that an evolution in garden style was indiscernible. It wasn’t until the 1700’s that gardens within England began to assert their own style which was more informal than strictly structured. Landscape designers were looking for the natural state as a reaction against ‘baroque’ manifestations and this century heralded the start of the English Landscape Movement (Hobhouse, 2002, p. 14).
The English landscape movement

England has provided the blue-print for many gardens throughout the Western world, and the English explorers and plant hunters, such as John Tradescant and son, are credited for introducing many plants from foreign countries into the English landscape, allowing the master landscapers and the world to enjoy their many discoveries. The English Landscape Movement in the 18th century is, according to Ogrin (1993), one of the most complex yet under explored areas in English garden history.

The landscapers of England

Lush rolling lawns and filled-to-bursting herbaceous borders are the image that many have about English gardens. Hyams, (1966) states that the term ‘English Garden’ does not relate to its geographical siting, but its aesthetical basis in that the desired style originated in England. It is this image of the ‘English Garden’ that many try to emulate all over the world whether based in climatically appropriate terrains or not (Hyams, 1966). Most gardens in this Northern Hemisphere country thrive with the best they could want; regular rainfall, sufficient sunshine hours and a climate that generally excludes the extreme heat yet brings the cold for the colourful alpine-type plantings. Hyams (1966, p. 259) attributes England’s “peculiarly mild climate” as one of the main influences behind the form the English garden has become.

Gardens were also influenced by trends. Earlier in this chapter I noted examples of gardens and nature influencing art and literature. Now we see a transposition of this idea, with examples of art and literature influencing gardens and garden designs. Alexander Pope (1688-1714) practiced a new style of garden design derived from literary images rather than from traditional garden design practices (Madder and Neubert-Mader, 1997) and he is credited with turning English garden design in a different direction (Roger, 2001). He practiced a new style of garden design derived from literary images rather than from traditional garden design practices (Mader and Neubert-Mader, 1997).

Pope disliked the formal gardens and felt that gardens should not follow a formal pattern, but be turned “into a narrative or a painting” (p.20). Artists depicting gardens
and nature in a pictorial sense “could contemplate how a favourite garden scene could be aesthetically improved, with a little help or rearrangement from enlightened man” (Mayne-Wilson, 2005, p. 3). This was the essence of the British landscape movement.

Landscapers such as William Kent (1685-1748), Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown (1715-1783), Humphrey Repton (1752-1818) and Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) influenced the style of the English countryside, as well as the appearance and ‘memory’ in our modern day of the great manor houses and estates from their individual periods of time. It may be that the birth of these designers’ talents coincided with the birth of English garden design. Johnson (1999) asserts that the English didn’t have a national style of gardening before the eighteenth century with English gardeners following the garden fashions set by the French and Dutch designers. These types of gardens were very formal and this style of garden continued in the English landscape until the more informal and truly English style of landscape began to appear.

William Kent saw all of nature as a garden, and as such has been credited as the founder of the English landscape tradition. Kent was a painter, architect and designer of theatrical and landscape settings of the early 18th century. According to Timms (2006), Kent took his style from eighteenth century landscape painting which harked back to “a fanciful notion of the Classical world…The landscaped park was an idealisation of nature’s beauty rather than any exposition of her abstract order” and gardens were freed from their “enclosing walls to embrace the world at large” (p. 17). His painter’s eye allowed him to make three dimensional creations in the form of gardens and Hobhouse (2002) notes that Kent used his talent for stage creation to manipulate views.

The importance of the natural looking landscape was recognised, and although the look was natural, the outcomes were, however, very much contrived. “Nature was trimmed and tidied to make it as fascinating as possible” (Hobhouse, 2002, p. 243).

Capability Brown has been credited as the most influential of all England’s landscapers, although as Timms (2006) notes, Brown termed himself a ‘placemaker’ as the term landscaper was a nineteenth century invention. Early in his career he
worked under William Kent and his style of garden design was to create a garden with a romantic and natural impression. Wide rolling green lawns with clusters of carefully placed trees were part of his repertoire and this image is almost archetypal with the Western world’s vision of English gardens. Vistas were carefully planned and created to show off points of interest within the garden. As with William Kent’s designs, whilst it was all designed to give the appearance of a ‘natural landscape’ it was still very much a designed landscape.

Humphrey Repton was the successor to Capability Brown (Timms, 2006) and continued to create gardens that “seemed to fit seamlessly in the surrounding countryside” (Hobhouse, 2002, p. 227). During his career he was occasionally employed to enhance further the landscapes created by Brown, which according to Hobhouse (2002) he did cautiously and with the awareness that Brown had created a long-term plan which may have needed some time to reach fruition.

Repton’s specialties were winding driveways which allowed for mere glimpses of the house as one entered the gates before taking a circuitous route to the house which had remained hidden during the approach, making the property appear to be much larger. We know from landscape preference research that winding pathways (driveways) are a preferred option and that this preference reaches back to our earliest human survival mechanism of being able to ‘see’ without being ‘seen’.

Repton was also known for connecting the landscape to the house with the use of portico’s and terraces as a formal link. His Red Books were prepared for each client and contained watercolour views of the estate with flaps or overlays which revealed the proposed alterations. Their grand title came from the red morroco binding and as well as the books becoming a display in their own right for the owners of the transformed estate (Hobhouse, 2002), they have also become a fascinating source of information for garden researchers and historians.

By the end of the 18th century the ‘English-style’ garden was very much desired and became models for reinterpretation within the gardens of Europe and further abroad. Continental versions were often pale imitations of the originals (Hobhouse, 2002) as much depended on the climate and terrain (Hyams, 1966). This is particularly apt for
those determined colonial settlers newly arrived in Australia who struggled to emulate and reproduce their gardens from home within a widely contrasting terrain and hindered by climatic conditions which proved undesirable for the growing of delicate specimens.

Garden design was now available to many more of the population than just the landed gentry. Landscape architecture “invaded the suburbs and their villas, the public park and the burial ground” and landowners were now able to “invoke fine-art treatment of their property” (Hunt, 1992, p. 286).

Nineteenth century gardens saw the introduction of novelties, inventions and revivals (Hobhouse, 2002) and according to Thacker (1997) there was no distinctive garden style, rather an eclectic collection of styles. Flowers again found a place within gardens which had previously been dominated by landscape vistas and views and dimensions were of a more ‘human scale’ (Mader & Neubert-Mader, 1997). Gardening manuals flooded the bookshelves in England which resulted in many botanical innovations taking place (Thacker, 1997). The ‘Gardeneque’ style was established – a more intimate style defined by the careful planting of trees and shrubs so that they were seen to be distinctly separate from each other – and Hobhouse (2002) notes that to a modern eye this type of design would seem formless however “it has remained popular with all those passionate plantspeople who rate plants higher than design” (p. 249).

William Robinson (1838-1935) was an influential garden designer and writer of this period (Turner, 1991). According to Mader & Neubert-Mader (1997) his publications of *the Wild Garden* in 1870 and *The English Flower Garden* in 1883 established him as “one of the most important forerunners of 20th century garden design” (p. 22). Robinson’s was a naturalistic style (Turner, 1991) with a close affinity to the cottage garden (Adams, 1991). He valued the gatherings of the plant hunters to create the informal gardens he was known for.

Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) was another influential garden designer of the late 19th century. She was trained as a painter and was also a renowned writer who, within her lifetime, contributed over two thousand articles to the world ‘bank’ of horticultural
knowledge. Like Robinson, she had a preference for the natural relationship between plants and their surroundings (Bisgrove, 1992), and had an interest in using native British plants and flowers within the “traditional crafts of the countryside” (Taylor, 1991, p. 31).

Jekyll was a gardener with no professional training but vast practical experience. Her talent was in the combining of flower colour and Taylor (1991) credits her as the first gardener to use colour in the garden “in a thoroughly painterly way” (p. 31). Jekyll was keen on the use of compatible foliage textures within her designs (Mader & Neubert-Mader, 1997) and Festing (1991, p. x) describes her as the “doyenne of herbaceous borders, woodlands and dry stone walls”. She often collaborated with the architect Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944) and according to Taylor (1991) the garden of Hestercombe in Somerset is one of their masterpieces.

Jekyll’s single greatest contribution to garden making was, according to Bisgrove (1992), her demonstrating that design and plantsmanship were compatible concepts that combined well, resulted in a harmonious, strong and successfully designed and planted garden.

The twentieth century English gardens built between 1900 and 1930, asserts Thacker (1997, p. 253), were based on designs “borrowed from every period of European garden design” and the nineteenth century styles of gardens moved “vigorously intact” into the twentieth century. Public gardens still featured formal bedding displays with ‘wedding cake’ styled mounds and tiered fountains of hanging plants “still plentiful along the promenades of seaside resorts” (p. 253).

**Post-war gardens**

England had been devastated during two World Wars. Over 200,000 homes had been destroyed by bombing and rebuilding in the post-war era saw many changes in architecture and garden design. Although there were fewer commissions for private garden designs, there was an increase in the design needs for the public sector (Turner, 1991) which saw the inception of the professions of town planner and landscape architect. Harwood (2000) explains how housing architects were often
responsible for most of the total landscape and housing designs within the redevelopment process as employing specialist landscape designers was often not possible because of budgetary restrictions. She also argues that “many of the most interesting landscape schemes of the post-war period, particularly for the public housing schemes, were the work of the architects who designed the buildings” (2000, p. 102).

According to Mader & Neubert-Mader (1997), the post-war years showed two completely contrasting garden trends. The designs of Jekyll and Lutyens continued their popularity but a new modern movement was developing in which free art and composition were combined.

In the second half of the twentieth century, outdoor living became a popular concept and Bisgrove (2000) notes the popularity of enjoying the garden without feeling the need to also enjoy the practice of gardening. This is reflected in the increase of low maintenance gardens and planting and the popularity of the garden centre (Alexander, 2002; Bisgrove, 2000; Gibson, 2002).

The popularity of outdoor living spaces, and the reverse of bringing the garden into the home with the use of large picture windows overlooking nearby areas of garden, is still a popular inclusion into home landscape design, and possibly even increasing in popularity. Gardens are progressively more often seen as areas in which to entertain, and the concept of leisure, not toil, is the priority for most home-owners in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. As such, the domain of low maintenance gardening has increased, however it is mostly young professional home-owners who dominate this increase in interest.

In the 1960’s Hyams (1966) felt that the modern English gardens could be divided into three categories: (1) museum pieces of the eighteenth century “which are preserved in their original form, as far as that is possible in a work of art whose materials are alive and growing (Hyams, 1966, p. 147), (2) those gardens which form a balance between the formally structured and the wilder, less formal styles, and (3) the woodland gardens which are the most romantic and the nearest thing to paradise in English garden design.
The level of dedication the English put into their gardens is high. The perfection of the English garden is helped, no doubt, by their highly desirable and ideal climate for gardening, as well as their comfort levels with the importance of nature, gardens and gardening. Bligh proclaims England’s climate “is better for horticulture than any other country’s, with the result that many of the world’s best gardens are to be found there” (1973, p. 3).

Conclusion

Myth, ‘magic’, folklore, nature veneration, botanic art and literature, floral languages and games are all interwoven to form the basis of the green world and therefore our human connection with the earth and nature. This human connection is, I believe, the result of many centuries ‘fine-tuning’ of our acceptance of these components as necessary to the existence of humans in both a mental and physical sense.

Gardening is a practical, practiced and acceptable form of preserving and continuing the cycle of these ancient practices, allowing humans to experience the restorative (Kaplan, 1973; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1990) benefits that a close connection with nature and the green world can bring.

As such, “good gardens have always marked high points in civilization. They encompass more aspects of our cultural and social history than any other form of art” states Sales (1995, p. 2). Gardens and gardening began with the establishment of ‘survival’ gardens for food and medicine, was manipulated with geometry and repetition in the Renaissance, and then moved through the philosophical age of seventeenth century gardening which featured schemes to “emulate nature in her natural state” (Hobhouse, 2002, p. 422). The Edwardian garden, which according to Hobhouse (2002) “embraced structured layouts” (p. 422) also provided the basis of the naturalistic style of gardening which was to remain until the end of the twentieth century. “The historicist approach to garden design”, states Sales (1995, p. 4) “is deeply rooted in Britain and is certainly still with us”.

The longevity of the English landscape contributes to its restful appearance and a feeling of restfulness is experienced by viewing it. The solidity and permanence
appeal to a gardener from a country with a younger history of white colonisation, as does the constancy of climate which preserves and sustains the continuation of this evocative landscape.

English gardeners are fortunate to have the idyllic climatic conditions in which to enjoy their passion for plants. Some English gardeners, however, have swapped this northern hemisphere ‘gardening idyll’ of rolling green fields dissected by hedgerows to become southern hemisphere gardeners in the drier and more desiccated climate of Australia. The knowledge learned and practiced within these comfortable gardening conditions would require relearning and rethinking to cope with the critical change in climate and gardening patterns.

Dorothea MacKellar captivates the English landscape in the verse 1 of her celebrated poem ‘My Country’. Chapter 4 – Australia, the Wide Brown Land – is prefaced by verses 2 to 6, and these give an indication of the contrast, harshness and climatic trials which gardeners and non-gardeners face in their lives as Australian residents.

The love of field and coppice
Of green and shaded lanes,
Of ordered woods and gardens
Is running in your veins.

Strong love of grey-blue distance,
Brown streams and soft, dim skies -
I know, but cannot share it,
My love is otherwise.

My Country by Dorothea Mackellar (Verse 1)
Chapter 4

Australia – The wide brown land

I love a sunburnt country,
A land of sweeping plains,
Of rugged mountain ranges,
Of droughts and flooding rains,
I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror -
The wide brown land for me!

Core of my heart, my country!
Her pitiless blue sky,
When, sick at heart, around us
We see the cattle die -
But then the grey clouds gather,
And we can bless again
The drumming of an army,
The steady soaking rain.

Core of my heart, my country!
Land of the rainbow gold,
For flood and fire and famine
She pays us back threesfold.
Over the thirsty paddocks,
Watch, after many days,
The filmy veil of greenness
That thickens as we gaze

My Country (1908, Verses 2, 4 & 5)
by Dorothea Mackellar (1885 - 1968)
This iconic Australian poem by Dorothea Mackellar captures the rugged essence of Australia. Within it, Mackellar describes our large continent by many of its climatic terrors – bushfires, drought, floods, the wide variations in topography – as well as its beauty such as the “jewelled sea”. It constructs images for the reader of the severity of this land of wide contrasts while still rendering the poet’s deep love of the country and the desire to live and die in this diverse land. It may be suggested that this flame of optimism lives in the Australian heart and this is what keeps our Australian gardeners planting and tending gardens, even though the climate seems inappropriate for gardening. As Garden notes (2005, p. 1), “Australia is the harshest continent after Antarctica for human settlement” and that Mackellar’s poem “provides strong hints of the nature of that [Australian] landscape and its challenging environment”.

There are major contrasts between New-World Australia and Old-World England: our depth of history and historical content vary, the Australian colonial population and the way the country became populated, and the climatic differences are important to note. Most Australian gardens “are both product and expression of immigrant experience” (Head, Muir & Hampel, 2004, p. 326) and although Aboriginal gardening was in existence (Hallam, 1989) it was the colonial inhabitants with their Anglo-Celtic heritage that have shaped our Australian garden history. Bligh relates that many Australians still did, until recently, refer to England as ‘home’ and look upon England “as a great, green garden in comparison with Dorothea Mackellar’s ‘sunburnt country’” (1973, p. 3).

History tells us of James Cook’s encounter of the Australian east coast in 1770 and its subsequent settlement in 1788 but little was initially noted of the importance of the first colonial gardens. According to Holmes (1999) the significance of the garden has been generally ignored by cultural historians (with the exceptions of George Seddon and John Foster) and that the area of Australian garden history has predominantly focussed on the recognition and preservation of “culturally significant gardens, parks and landscapes” (p. 152). This chapter focuses on Australia’s history of gardens and gardening, how we garden in present times, our approach to nature and the factors which influence our gardening opinions and choices. Future directions will be determined and climate will be discussed as this changing factor will increasingly play an important role in determining gardening approaches.
The great southern ‘myth’ – fact or fiction?

Our colonial history is a mere fraction of “Old World” countries such as England and this should be taken into account when reviewing the differences between the two nations. England, as shown in the previous chapter, has a rich and long-lived history revolving around and encapsulating gardens, gardening and gardeners. The richness of their horticultural history could be linked with their fullness of historical background, something that is bereft in our white, colonial Australian culture, where mythology is often confused with folklore. It could be suggested that the connection of the English gardener to their garden with the strong and deep connection to the earth and its myths is different to that with which the Australian gardener has an association. Trimble (1995, p. 13) asserts that

“for many occidental Australians, from the nineteenth century until the 1970s the landscape and Australia have been synonymous in our mythology, not as a source of plenty, but as a harsh, often cruel challenge by which character and endurance are measured”.

As previously noted, Australia as a white colony is lacking in myths and legend, the area in which the English are so richly embedded. Walsh (2003) suggests this is because migrating to the opposite hemisphere “caused the practical application of generations of oral history to be altered dramatically” (p. 16) and therefore the construction of the myth is changed (Bell, 2003).

Australia as a country, however, is not lacking for myth and legend as indigenous Australians have many diverse legends relating to their natural surroundings, their connection to family and their connection to the earth and natural elements. It is important to emphasise that the indigenous Australians “deified the landscape…like the ancient Greeks” (Trimble, 1995, p. 12). These people were hunter gatherers, “they had no need of gardens for food or pleasure” (Trimble, 1995, p. 12) and they maintained the landscape around them without destroying it for agrarian purposes. Their culture encouraged them to respect the landscape and the landscape would then repay that respect by providing food to the people. Buildings in the landscape were not erected by these people apart from “rudimentary shelters” notes Trimble (1995, p. 12). These indigenous Australians came to know the native plants well as these “bush” foods were the principal sources of their survival. “While they had no
agriculture or domesticated animals they learned to live with and, to a certain extent, manage their environment” (Valder, 1998, p. 4).

Many aboriginal myths relate to the natural elements in the landscape: the trees, the flowers, the moon and stars, the animals and people. Their mythology, asserts Trimble (1995, p. 12) “explains the landscape as the embodiment of gods and ancestral spirits who are present as natural creatures, rivers, waterholes, stars, rocks, caves and special places. Together, their legends, the ‘Dreamings’, tell the history of the people and their country, and the lore ensuring its proper use and maintenance, and thereby, the people’s survival”.

Reed (1999) in his book Aboriginal Myths, Legends & Fables acquaints the reader with many myths and legends regarding totemic ancestors, the Great Father, creation myths, legends about tree people, flower people, crocodile people and star people, and fables about animals, people, seasonal changes, life and death. “Instead of temples, existing land formations were their monuments” (Trimble, 1995, p. 12). This small selection of myth and legend associated with these people demonstrates how complex and considerable their mythology is, and it is for this reason that I do not intend to enter this fascinating and sizeable portal.

These aboriginal myths and legends, however, were ignored or devalued by the colonial settlers and their myths, along with many other aspects of the existence of the Aboriginal peoples, were seen as worthless and non-existent.

The white English colonists and emigrants who arrived after 1788 failed to recognise this indigenous culture. “They stamped the landscape with the symbol of their own mythology: the Palladian villa set in an English park” notes Trimble (1995, p. 12).

My assertion of an Australian lack of true mythology refers to the lack of mythology connected to the white colonial settlers. Tranter and Donoghue (2007) state their belief that foundation myths, such as those which recall the settlement of the British colonies by convicts and free settlers, form the basis of Australian nation history and an Australian mythscape which Bell (2003) describes as “a story of the origins of the nation and of subsequent momentous events” (p. 75).
Interaction between the newly arrived English colonists and the indigenous Aboriginal people was poor and the lack of communication between them did not allow for the exchange of ideas and culture. Many texts written about the initial colonisation give the impression that the English arrivals thought the native population were savages and had little to offer their superior race. This was reiterated in their awareness of food sources, where the indigenous people were able to survive and thrive using their local knowledge of safe and nutritious food plants to supplement their diet – something that the new arrivals discovered in due course but of which they never took full advantage.

While Australian gardeners feel attachment and satisfaction with their gardening, shown by the popularity of garden publications and nursery sales, it has been suggested that the lack of myth and mythological background in the colonial or migrant populations revokes its attempt at connection. This however, does not mean that Australian gardeners or Australians in general are devoid of the desire for the “myth, folklore and ancient” connection in which England is immersed, although it has been suggested that “there is something within the Australian psyche that resists spirituality” and that our “uneasy relationship with the land reflects our uneasy and silent spirituality” (Brady, 1998).

A quick Google search indicates the number of Pagan Australian websites and publications all following the Northern Hemisphere traditions but with Southern Hemisphere alterations to the seasonal cycles of celebration dates. This would suggest that a need for connection with the earth is desirous and is perhaps spreading within this “new” country. Worldwide, there appears to be a reawakening to the importance of nature, the natural environment and our reconnection with it, one example of which is the increasing interest in the ancient symbols such as the Green Man. Another hint at a reconnection with the earth may be seen in the popularity of water features. These cooling “pieces of art” not only represent the ever-present earth force of the water goddesses (Green, 1992; Jones & Pennick, 1995; MacKillop, 1998; Ross, 1996), but a cooling, refreshing and invigorating vision in a dry and dried out landscape.
To understand the challenges and struggles faced by early Australian gardeners the very nature of this vast country needs to be explored, however the magnitude of this task prevents it within the bounds of this thesis. What follows, however, is a brief description of the geography, topography and climatic characteristics of this “large island” which helps in clarifying the enormity of the challenge facing the early settlers in this New-World country.

Australia is known to be the largest island on earth and contains many different geographies and topographies within its shores. It is considered to be “the lowest, flattest and, apart from Antarctica, the driest of the continents. Unlike Europe and North America, where some landscapes date back to ‘only’ 20,000 years ago, when great ice sheets retreated, the age of landforms in Australia is generally measured in many millions of years. This fact gives Australia a very distinctive physical geography” (ABS, 2002).

Garden (2005) in his book Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific: An Environmental History describes it as the oldest continent in geographical terms and the second harshest of all continents for human settlement. Australia has a land mass of approximately 7,692,030 square kilometres, approximately 32 times the geographical size of the United Kingdom. It stretches from the cool and moist Antarctic climes of 43 degrees 39 minutes south to near-equatorial latitudes (10 degrees 41 minutes south) (ABS, 2002) with a “tropical climate marked by long dry winters and wet, cyclonic summers” (Garden, 2005, p. 2). From the tropical regions of the north, to the arid red centre of Alice Springs, and to the winter snow covered mountains in New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania, Australia covers a remarkable range of climatic conditions within the one country.

Australia is renowned for the extremes which are experienced: bushfire, cyclones, flood and more recently, drought (ABS, 2004). According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2002) a large part of Australia can be considered arid or semi-arid and temperatures can be considered extreme in some instances with some daily figures soaring as high as 50°C and others falling well below zero. Generally, though, the
average maximum temperature is 28.7°C and the average minimum temperature is 16.8°C (BoM, 2007). Annual average rainfall is 442.2mm however some regions experience falls of less than 300mm.

Garden (2005) describes the majority of the Australian landscape as “typically” consisting of red, sandy soil with stunted vegetation in an arid climate and flat landscape although he does concede there are more reasonably climatic areas within the country, namely in the south western corner and along the south-east coast. According to Iain Dawson of the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG) there are seven climatic zones within Australia. The Plant Hardiness Zones map (figure 5) is an adaptation of the United States Department of Agriculture system by the ANBG to illustrate the hardiness zones applicable to Australian regions. The seven zones within the Australian adaptation range from the lowest temperatures in zone 1 (-15 to -10°C) through to zone 7 (15-20°C). The Australian participants were from the east coast of New South Wales (within zones 3 and 4) and ranged from coastal to marginally cooler mountain regions within a 100km radius.

![PLANT HARDINESS ZONES](image)

**Figure 5. Australian Plant Hardiness Zones (Source: Australian National Botanic Gardens, 2007)**

Conversely, Australia also contains greener and more lushly vegetated areas of grasslands, wooded areas and dramatic mountain ranges. Amongst its exceptional vegetation, Australia boasts many World Heritage Listed areas including those of
Kakadu National Park, Gondwana Rainforests of Australia, the Greater Blue Mountains Area and the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

**Climatic challenges**

Climate played a large role in the settlement of Australia and according to the Macquarie World Atlas (1996)

“the inhospitable nature of much of Australia’s landscape has meant that settlement in many areas of the country is difficult, if not impossible. Thus most of the population is concentrated in two widely separated coastal regions” (p. 178).

These two regions refer to the east-coast curve from Queensland, through New South Wales, Victoria and into South Australia and the smaller region across the country on the south-west coast of Western Australia, neither region extending more than several hundred kilometres inland from the coast (Macquarie World Atlas, 1996). With the exception of Canberra, all other Australian capital cities are located on the coast. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2004) around 84.7% of the Australian population resides within 50 kilometres of the coast, with the coast and coastal lifestyle playing a major role in the Australian culture as well as the perceptions that foreign visitors have of this country.

![Map of population distribution](source: ABS, 2007)
Although high temperatures may be delightful for tourism, for gardeners they can prove challenging and the harshness of the Australian climate may be viewed as a ‘trial’ by some. Bligh (1973) notes that the early settler nurserymen struggled “to cultivate their plants in a totally strange country with a capricious and often cruel climate” (p. xvi)

In comparison with English climates, Australia faces generally higher temperatures with around 50% less rainfall (see Table 3). Precipitation in Australia follows a seasonal pattern with the southern parts receiving winter rainfall, whereas the northern parts of the country receive their rainfall in the summer months (ABS, 2004).

The diagram below illustrates the dramatic difference in average annual rainfall and temperatures between Australia and England – conditions which would be a major impact on the challenges faced by the new colonial gardeners whose success would ensure their survival.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Average Maximum Temps. (°C)</th>
<th>Average Minimum Temps. (°C)</th>
<th>Average Rainfall (mm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>442.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>834.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that these means have quite a high Standard Deviation and vary accordingly to the various climatic factors found in the differing climate zones of Australia and England. Nonetheless the average figures all give some indication of the temperature and rainfall factors for both participant countries.

The warmer temperatures may have been a welcome change until the extremes of summer arrived, however if the settlers received similar amounts of rain as these modern calculations indicate, keeping their crops moist in Port Jackson’s ‘sandy,
infertile soil which would prove inadequate for European crops” (Davies, 1989, p. 118) may have added to their hardship.
A brief history of Australian gardens and gardening

Australian plants are unique within our Earth and the eminent garden writer Peter Valder in his article ‘Who Discovered Our Plants’ (1998, p. 4) believes that many Australian citizens would recognise their own country if they were to be “blindfolded, taken round the world, then deposited somewhere in Australia again…This is because the Australian landscape is so characteristic”. This is, he asserts, because at least 85 percent of our native plants do not occur elsewhere and are “unlike anything found in the northern hemisphere”. Dr Valder believes that Australia’s flora is still not adequately known and that only around 18 000 to 20 000 specimens had been described by 1998 and that in total our native flora may include up to around 25 000 different species.

The gardens of this wide brown land have traversed many aspects of style and reason. Originating with gardens for survival, they have metamorphosed throughout war and survival dominated times into areas of beauty, and further into more practical areas requiring less water and maintenance.

Practicality is an important issue within Australian gardens and it could be argued that its importance has arisen from the need thrown up by the elemental peculiarities and challenges of this country’s climate and history.

Miss Winifred West, the former principal of Frensham, a school for girls in New South Wales’ Southern Highlands, encapsulated this concept of practicality within the Australian gardening ethos when she stated that it was important to imbue children with a love of beauty as with other virtues, something which she believed was particularly important in Australia, which had a tendency towards utilitarianism. According to Miss West, things that were considered necessary or desirable ranked far higher than anything of beauty (Cains, 2001).

And utility did take precedence over prettiness (Timms, 2006). Some may argue that this leaning towards practicality stems from the very nature of Australia’s survive-or-
perish beginnings, and with our increasingly arid climate with reduced rainfall, is set to be a continuing trend.

The green of gardens helped to block the dry and harsh landscapes, both mentally and physically, and as such gardens have great importance within Australia. This was apparent from the very beginning in 1788 when the first sods were turned, signifying the beginning of the farming colonisation of New South Wales.

**The first Australian settlement gardens**

“Gardens were one of those ideas the British brought with them when they colonised Australia” (Holmes, 1999, p. 152) and their “heritage of garden making in a ‘green country’” only served to highlight the realities experienced by the early settlers in the “sandy, infertile ground of their new land” (Bligh, 1973, p. 1). Upon settling in Sydney Cove in 1788 areas were quickly cleared to begin the first colony gardens which were to grow plants for food and plants for medicine (Bligh, 1973). Three days after disembarkation, convicts were digging the first vegetable garden for the colony (Baskin and Dixon, 1996; Davies, 1989) and grapes, fig, orange, pear and apple trees were shipped ashore soon after arrival in their new land (Bligh, 1973; Collins, 1798; Davies, 1989).

Medicinal plants were important to these former Northern hemisphere inhabitants and the newly arrived British settlers saw a botanical landscape that was quite alien.

“There were no familiar plants, to gather from the side of the road, to supplement the diet or relive a cough. Alienation from the known botanical landscape of the Northern Hemisphere was as much a hardship as were the lack of water and supplies” (Walsh, 2003, p. 17).

Agriculture was vitally important to the new colony as it allowed the new settlers to “eke from the land sufficient food to feed new and rising populations. This was not an easy challenge given that Australian soils and climate often baffled incipient farmers whose knowledge and crops were shaped by a European temporal rhythm and seasonal and climatic template” (Garden, 2005, p. 80).

“The establishment of the fruits of the Old World in the New demanded dogged perseverance and determination” states Bligh (1973). Theft was rife and the
Governor’s orchard was guarded. According to Davies (1989, p. 119) a Lieutenant Ralph Clark “thought he could avoid the problem by situating his garden on an island in the middle of the harbour. Undeterred, the hungry convicts still managed to swim out and steal his cabbages”.

Across the other side of the globe at this time, Bligh (1973) notes that Humphry Repton was recording his impressions of nineteenth century garden design and architecture in Mother England, “however at a distance of 14,000 miles of ocean and eight months by sailing ship, little Reptonian influence was apparent in the beginnings of Australian gardening” (p. xiv).

Within Australian horticulture, Elizabeth Macarthur was an important influence on early Australian horticulture. She was “the first educated woman to reside in the colony” (Bligh, 1973, p. 18) and Graham Ross (personal communication, 20 July 2007, Homebush) credits her with “starting horticulture and the beginnings of horticulture as we know it today” with her plant pressings and classes for other interested parties, which were means of recording and understanding native specimens.

Of the convicts deported from England, many were women and later more women arrived as forced emigrants, as accompanying wives or daughters of the soldiers or as free settlers. The result of colonization to this vastly contrasting land was considered by Walsh (2003, p. 15) to be

“a rupture, not only in the bond these women had with their families, but also with their cultural traditions, one of which was linked to the herbal lore of the countryside”.

**Making a place ‘home’**

Creating gardens, states Holmes (1999) is a way for new settlers to establish themselves in the new and foreign landscape, and through “planting, tending and harvesting, settlers transformed alien spaces into images of their own making” (Holmes, 1999, p. 152). Beatrice Bligh states that gardens were important for both the men and women of the colony but that

“it was always obvious where a wife tended her plot, and in her gardening she found an interesting and time consuming hobby with which to help face life
in a country which was not only strange and lonely, but often bewildering and frightening” (Bligh, 1973, p. 9).

The first grapevine cuttings, brought by Governor Phillip on the First Fleet from the Cape of Good Hope, were planted in Farm Cove in 1788 (Walsh, 1979; Clark, 2004) and by 1791 the Governor’s garden at Parramatta contained three acres of vines (Walsh, 1979). By 1795 New South Wales was self sufficient in grain and Baskin and Dixon (1996, p. 5) note that a letter from Governor Phillip to the Secretary of the Home Department, Lord Sydney, told how the fruits and vines were thriving and other vegetables were “plentiful including cauliflowers and French beans, and strawberries from the Cape of Good Hope”, although there were still not enough vegetable to sustain the colony.

It was fundamentally an unskilled labour force that went on to create and maintain the gardens which would feed the new colony. Vegetables and fruit for survival were the predominant plantings which were tended by convicts lacking gardening expertise. Although not relying on fruit and vegetable growing in modern times for our survival, twentieth century studies tell us that beginners generally prefer growing vegetables, as was shown in a study involving 50 home gardeners (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1990). It revealed that

“gardeners with less experience tended to emphasize vegetables; the tangible benefits were most salient for them. With experience, gardeners in this study tended more to flowers and discovered a new set of satisfactions, centering on the many ways in which gardening offers fascination” (p. 239).

This holds true for the initial establishment of the edible gardens and the later aesthetic gardens which were created once an immediate source of food had been established in the form of a vegetable garden.

Clark (1964) notes there were

“seven hundred and fifty odd convicts embarked in the first fleet for Botany Bay. They had all been sentenced to transportation for their crimes, a punishment that consisted of exile for seven years, fourteen years, or life – and forced labour. The aims of the punishment were to deter from crime, to reform the convicts, and to provide labour for the colonies” (1964, p. 12).

Of the first fleet convicts that arrived in January 1788, only two had any notation of any horticultural occupation on their records and, according to Mayo (2000, p. 15)
“the new settlers had no botanist or gardener to give them advice”. Baskin and Dixon (1996, p. 5) reiterate this and add that “this seems almost inexplicable, particularly as Banks had employed a gardener and an assistant to sail in the HMS Bounty to collect bread fruit from Tahiti at about the time the First Fleet was being assembled”.

Bligh (1973) states that “in contrast to the soft greens and moist air of their homeland everything appeared hard and dry”. Clark (1894) corroborates this when he refers to the Australian bushland as funereal, secret and stern. Although it appeared to the settlers that the area was lacking useful vegetation and that the flora existing there was “nutritionally and economically worthless” (Mayo, 2000, p. 16), the native Guringai people had been successfully surviving on the native food sources within the Port Jackson area. According to Baskin and Dixon (1996) the knowledge of food sources used by the indigenous population were summarily discounted although it was noted that the early colonials did supplement their diet with inclusions of ‘bush foods’ such as native currants and New Zealand spinach leaves.

**Survival or splendour**

The earliest days of the colony in New South Wales saw little time for beautification. Survival was therefore the primary occupation and vegetable gardens and orchards were established swiftly upon white settlement in Port Jackson. The expectation that crops would flourish in the new colony were dashed by reality, asserts Plowman (2000, p. 4). “The officers were quarrelsome, the convicts useless, the lands disappointing” she continues, “instead of the long grassy stretches of which Banks had spoken, there was a thin strip of ‘very indifferent’ country hemmed in by an impassable mountain barrier”. Baskin and Dixon (1996) do note though that while most plants imported into Australia were for food production and therefore survival, the Surgeon Bowes Smyth “brought the hardy geranium (*Pelargonium* spp.), together with grape vines” which “prospered in the poor and arid soil” (p. 6).

Ornamental plants caused great excitement within the Sydney community and Bligh (1973, p. 16) reported the stampede to the wharf to gaze at a “small emblem of English gardens” – the first potted primrose to arrive by ship. Importing familiar favourite plants from Britain “became the link that sustained many women in the
early days of the colony” (Walsh, 2003, p. 17) as it allowed them to re-establish a memorable contact with their past lives. The familiar flora of their homeland was comforting to them in a new country with a vastly different flora and landscape. Wagner (1960) believes the considerable effect that the new Australian landscape had on the new settlers was ultimately because all humans are dependent on plants for survival. New ways of planting and cultivating suitable to this new land were needed. This adaptation to the new landscape is symbolic of the continuation of the lore passed through the generations of grandmothers, mothers and daughters, albeit under vastly different climatic conditions (Walsh, 2003).

Garden (2005) describes the English perception that “the British had the right (or even the God-given duty) to appropriate the land and make it productive” (p. 15). Eventually the new settlers made the land their own:

“Stolen land became claimed and ‘owned’ through this central ‘ritual of habitation’. Europeans transformed unfamiliar landscapes and invested them with their own traditions and expectation. In the process they changed the meanings of those landscapes and began to establish a sense of place” (Holmes, 1999, p. 152).

Davies (1989) cites an early Australian settler who described the general destruction of the Australian bushland until it resembled something more in keeping with the English sensibilities as ‘deplorable’ and that settlers appeared to consider the surrounding landscape as wild and uncivilised unless it has been duly cleared. According to Garden (2005, p. 67) the British “assumed the right to occupy new lands, to exploit them for immediate benefit, and to acquire possession for their descendants” and that the general British perception was of a continent “waiting for development, essentially a collection of resources waiting to be turned into wealth”.

The beginning of the new century, however, showed that Sydney had now added some splendour over the necessary survival plantings. Once homes were established, embellishment could begin and, according to Timms (2006) this was for more than just an aesthetic reason. He states that “Aside from its productivity, the garden served as both a nostalgic reminder of the home they’d left behind and a public statement of pride in the one they’d found” (p.32). This nostalgia is seen in Bligh’s description of the simple, white-washed Sydney dwellings “with their small gardens, always in a
formal English cottage style with a central path” (1973, p. 15). Bligh also notes the importance of gardening by naming seven coastal islands Garden Island. Holmes (1999) reiterates the positive aspects of gardening in a new country by asserting that the role of gardens was to “promote a settled and productive citizenry” which was “supposed to imbue their owners with a love of country and a sense of place” (p. 155). Walsh (2003) adds that recreating their remembered countryside, as many attempted within their gardens, allowed them to manipulate their own environment, again giving the new inhabitants a comforting feeling of familiarity. The garden became more than a place of refuge – it became a place “made in the image of their memory” (Walsh, 2003, p. 23).

In the city, Baskin and Dixon (1996, p. 9) describe how the gardens of Government House had developed to allow shrubs, trees and lawn to replace some vegetable gardens. Labour and leisure were beginning to become intermingled and there was “more freedom from the demands of food production to think about the decorative design of gardens”. A nursery was established on what is now known as the grounds of the University of Sydney, and Rose Hill saw the advent of the first Botanic Gardens in Sydney, which was shortly followed in 1816 by the gardens hugging Sydney Harbour which today house the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney.

All this was achieved in the first thirty years of settlement, according to Baskin and Dixon (1996), and although the smaller town gardens were still largely geometric in design, the larger gardens and estates were following the English picturesque design style. According to Garden (2005, p. 70) “Gardening was an issue redolent of the class attitudes and social aspirations of British society, where the possession of land and a garden was largely limited to a propertied minority”.

Jim Endersby, in his 2000 paper A garden enclosed: botanical bartering in Sydney, 1818-39 notes how stocking these gardens with “everything from writing paper to cabbage seeds” relied originally on a “long, hazardous sea voyage from Britain” to New South Wales. And although there were no taxonomic studies undertaken in the early days of the Botanic Garden, he asserts that many Australian plants, whether as dried specimens or seeds, made their way back to England to be “bartered” (p. 318) for European crops. Seeds were distributed without charge by the Garden, however
Endersby (2000) notes that the recipients of such largesse were major landholders who kept these to themselves and therefore the Botanic Garden “offered no benefit to most of the populace”.

In 1826 the first professional landscaper and nurseryman arrived. Thomas Shepherd trained under a pupil of the celebrated English landscaper ‘Capability’ Brown, and as he had been trained “in the landscape school of such famous men as Capability Brown and Repton …it was natural that the pattern for the gardens which were being formed around the large houses in New South Wales followed on these lines” (Bligh, 1973, p. 42).

Before leaving England, Shepherd had been a nurseryman for twenty years in the London area of Hackney (Davies, 1989). He began the Darling Nursery on Parramatta Road and as an addition, agreed to conduct a series of horticultural lectures about gardening and landscape to improve the general knowledge on those subjects as he had a good appreciation of the natural landscape but died shortly after delivering his first lecture. This set-back aside, Australian gardening was on the rise.

**Gardens of the twentieth century**

According to Holmes (1999, p. 154) “a settled home life was seen as important of the stability of the young nation and gardens were integral to this”. Another benefit, Holmes believes is, that gardens bred good citizens and the link “between gardens, citizenship and civilisation was particularly significant in Australia in the wake of federation”. Gardens had now moved beyond the strictly survival oriented plots which marked the introduction of aesthetic gardens into our colonialised country.

**The Federation garden**

1901 saw the federation of the Australian states and a surge of respect “for things Australian… a growing nostalgia for the landscape and the native flora” (Trimble, 1995, p. 14). These, however, could be included within the Australian garden without “challenging the dominance of hierarchy of the plants therein” (Holmes, 1999, p. 161). Australia’s native flora became a symbol of the national spirit, states
Whitehead (2001) and eventually each State adopted a wildflower as their emblem. Gardens also exhibited nationalist overtones:

“It was to be reflective of Australian gardeners’ ability to carry on traditions brought from Europe, as well as adapt to the possibilities and challenges of gardening in a new and modern world, to ‘capture the spirit of the land in which we live’. The capturing of this spirit, however, entailed the negation of the spirit recognised by the original inhabitants” (Holmes, 1999, p. 162).

Federation style was directly influenced by the art nouveau style that originated in Europe (NIAA, 2001) but also included French chateau architecture, Queen Anne and Romanesque Revival movements, and North American shingle-style within its “sources of inspiration” (Betteridge, 2001, p. 9). In keeping with that style of architecture the specialised landscapes may have presented “a stylised but shady and inviting setting for the dramatic roof lines, verandas, hedges and gardens typical of the era” (NIAA, 2001, p. 2). Ornamentation inspired by the Australian flora and fauna took the form of wrought iron, intricate plasterwork, floral wallpapers and glazed ceramic tiles. These unique styles of ornamentation were characteristic of the Federation style and it has been suggested that within this period, Australians began to demonstrate the individualism and larrikinism that appears intrinsic to our national identity.

World War I and the 1930’s depression retarded the development of Australian gardens. During the war most gardeners concentrated their horticultural efforts towards the alleviation of hunger and deprivation. Survival through self-sufficiency was paramount. Those with vegetable gardens fared better than those without (Wyatt E G, Personal communication, 10 June, 1990, Roseville) and therefore nearly all available space within domestic gardens was turned over to the production of edible crops. “A properly cared-for home is regarded as the highest symbol of civilised society” was the maxim for the interwar years, as noted in Searl’s Key to Australian Gardening (1922). Before much recovery from the war and the following depression could occur, World War II began and “garden making was virtually suspended” (Bligh, 1973, xvi). Similar scenarios from World War I occurred during World War II and it was not until the conclusion of the war period that gardeners felt they could ‘guiltlessly’ garden for aesthetic appeal over the edible essentials (Wyatt E G, Personal communication, 10 June, 1990, Roseville).
With war over, Australians could again concentrate on making their homes their castles and this pride in one’s home was also reflected in the garden. Morris (2003) in *Up the Garden Path* makes the observation that a social impact occurring between the wars was the escalation of home gardeners over the professionals. “The body of professionals, or trained gardeners and garden designers, was smaller in Australia than in Britain” she notes, and adds that the garden designers of this interwar period advocated the “fusion of the formal English Gardens, popular in Britain during the same period, with the Italianate” (p. 10). Again, Australian gardeners were influenced by British garden styles and Bligh (1973) emphasises that it was people from another hemisphere who were recommending and collecting the specimens to be planted around Australian homes. Bligh (1973) then suggests that although there was an English influence in the gardens, “there was no ancient tradition as in the mother country, where the style of gardens followed historical events and the way of life of a garden-loving people over many hundreds of years” (p. xiii).

The garden was a place for many activities and householders now took to the tools themselves. Information was being published to guide the home gardener in the peculiarities of planting and staking methods, seed selection and other gardening mysteries. “Manuals for the flower garden and vegetable growing were the most common type of garden books available” notes Morris (2003, p. 7). Some of these guides were originally provided for the cost of the return post which contrasts sharply with the huge contemporary industry of the modern garden guides and manuals available. One gardening guide which is regularly updated and has consistently remained at the number one positions for gardening guides (Horton, 2007) is the Yates Garden guide which saw its inception in 1895 when the Arthur Yates & Co., Seed Merchants in Sydney published the first of many editions.

**The post-war gardens**

Setting the seal on the move away from the previously formal garden styles was the disenchantment with Europe after two World Wars. However, a less formal English style was beginning to emerge with the increasing popularity of Miss Edna Walling’s inspiration and designs. She introduced “new ideas for a casual style of gardening which suited the conditions, with emphasis on the observance of nature and the use
of indigenous trees and plants and mossy boulders” (Bligh, 1973, p. 99). Bligh describes Walling as a lone voice at that stage of Australian horticulture. She produced books and gardening articles, unique but easy, with sketches and designs that even a beginner could reproduce. The effect of her Australian-inspired garden style and designs reached far and wide within Australia, and Bligh (1973) believes that when the first editions went out of print and Miss Walling retired, that “the much-needed crusade for better Australian gardens came to a standstill” (p. 99).

Time and interest were becoming scarce in the Australian garden and this saw the advent of many time-saving innovations. Two sources of great national pride - the Hills Hoist and Victa lawnmower – now featured within the great Australian Dream. Garden design was also becoming less formal and time-demanding, and during the 1950’s the trend towards native gardens was growing. By the mid-sixties, this concept was popular with young adults, “and because native vegetation is unsuited to formal garden design, it offered a perfect environment for the informal Australian lifestyle” (Trimble, 1995, p. 14). Suburbs had been built into the natural landscape with features such as large slabs of bush rock and stands of native trees and grasses, dominating the style of the suburb (Trimble, 1995). Bushland reserves, which some fortunate home owners have situated adjacent their properties, are coveted, and the combination of bushland and Australian homes have become a familiar theme.

This does not always bode well, as those who regularly face the need for evacuation from raging summer bushfires know. Yet many Australians persist in living within these treed areas, fully aware of the potential dangers which one day may occur and strip the landscape of its living history. This persistence is an example of how the lure of the bush outweighs the danger of natural catastrophes.

“No longer a place of fear, the bush has become a garden, a familiar place recognisably Australian, a new arcadia, a place not for naked nymphs and goddesses but for bush spirits of another kind…Occidental Australians no longer feel like visitors in an alien land and they have less need of ancient or romantic texts, picturesque techniques of representation, or heroic pioneers to interpret it. Myths, like gardens, change” (Trimble, 1995, p. 16).
Importing invaders

Whilst bushland provides visual appeal, the relationship between the bush and humans is a tenuous one, and is often unappreciated and taken for granted. This lack of recognition of the bushland and its value (for many) has seen it damaged and polluted; both intentionally and unintentionally. One way the Australian bushland has declined is through the irresponsible dumping of garden waste and through the planting of specimens within their own gardens which have a tendency to re-establish themselves within adjacent bushland areas. Over the past decade gardeners and environmentalists have been informing us of the invasion from ‘alien invaders’, more commonly known as weeds, yet in many other cultures these would be considered appropriate garden specimens for their landscapes. Many of these invasive plants and weeds were brought from England (Walsh, 2003) and other ‘stop overs’ on the voyages with a view to beautify the harsh Australian landscape (Bligh, 1973, p. 21), however the new climate may have proved more agreeable than expected and controlling their growth may have become difficult within the wide expanse of the countryside.

The harsh Australian landscape has features which Garden (2005) describes as unusual, ungainly and viewed as second rate and the imported plants were an attempt to ‘beautify’ it to English standards.

“The assumption of superiority of all things British and the pride in their great emerging empire reinforced the belief in their right to occupy new environments and displace indigenous people, but also spilled over into tangential issues such as aesthetics, judgements about indigenous species, and utilitarian landscape evaluation. Landscapes that did not suit their taste for order or beauty or were not judged of value for economic enterprise were dismissed” (Garden, 2005, p. 68).

This may have been an attempt to soften and moderate the dramatically different bushland first viewed by the new colonial settlers. Garden (2005, p. 70) states that most native plants were considered untidy, straggly, “inadequate in their flowers” and “lacking the bright green of European foliage”. Meadows, hedgerows and softer English colours were preferred, he insists, when compared to the colour and shapes of the alien landscape. Willows were imported to line our lakes and rivers in imitation of the English picturesque and sturdy hedging delineated our plots. Garden (2005, p. 69) refers to the negligible value given to the native landscape and how it
became part of the colonial ‘mission’ to transform the environment, “to convert wasteland to production, to ‘improve’ the landscape, and to create a more familiar culture and order”. As such, vessels arrived containing collections of fruit trees, vegetable varieties and garden specimens, allowing the colonists to fulfil their desire to introduce favoured garden plants.

Blackberry was highly sought after for its luscious berries and the English violet and humble blue forget-me-not brought sweet memories from ‘home’. Although these plants satisfied the essential reason for their import, which was the establishment of gardens for aesthetic and nostalgic purposes, each of these have now been recognised as either classed weeds (willow, blackberry and some hedging plants) or an invasive plant (violets) or environmental risk, such as the forget-me-nots. This country now boasts a staggering number of plants within its shores, yet an increasing number are being marked as weeds or as potential environmental weeds. This term refers to plants which were introduced as ornamental species and have taken to their new environments so successfully that they have exceeded their previous growth habits and sizes.

One good example is the Camphor Laurel (*Cinnamomum camphora*). This is a stately tree with a rounded canopy and much used in the older suburbs of Sydney. According to Clifford-Smith (2003) the NSW Department of Education unconsciously endorsed the Camphor Laurel as a very popular shade tree by planting it in many of the States school playgrounds. Unfortunately, these self seed prolifically as well as the seeds being enjoyed by birds (Ermert, 1998, p. 102). Those seedlings finding their way into bushland areas soon grow to shade the ground below, and often out-shade native flora below the canopy.

Other plants exhibiting weedy tendencies in Australia but which are still considered valued garden plants in other countries (such as England) include privet (*Ligustrum sinense*) – a popular English hedging plant – Blue Morning Glory (*Ipomea indica*) and the Briar Rose, which Bligh (1973) attributes to the import by James Styles. It was planted within his bushland garden at Bungonia but “later spread beyond all control over vast areas of the southern tablelands” (p. 37). Its popularity was spread with the seeds which were often collected by homesick wives and its hold on
Australian paddocks spread even further (Davies, 1989). Eventually the gardeners learned that what exhibited weediness in one area may have been useful and desirable in another. Burridge (2005, p. 4) notes she is crestfallen to find some of the “thriving (and therefore much loved) plants” from her own garden listed in Ermert’s *Gardener’s Companion to Weeds*. “That my blue periwinkle invaded and smothered all adjacent plantings I attributed to my gardening prowess – but there it was on page 164”.

Although it could be argued that these invaders have only succeeded in proliferating themselves within land disturbed through clearing or cultivating by non-indigenous settlers, they are nonetheless now a problem for modern day Australia.

Older gardens and historic houses may feature many of the less-wanted plants, prompting the discussion of whether their inclusion in the landscape is valid (Blood & Cuffley, 2006). Environmentalists are concerned that keeping these potentially or recognised pest plants will impact on Australia’s landscape and appear to be of the opinion that where possible and practical, these specimens should be removed. Garden historians, on the other hand, advocate the preservation and in some instances, even the replacement of the same species should a specimen in an historic garden site die (Blood & Cuffley, 2006). This is yet another example of the struggles facing the Australian gardener in our quest for green utopia.

*Aqua vitae*

*Water, water, everywhere,*  
*Nor any drop to drink.*

S T Coleridge (1896) *Rime of the Ancient Mariner.*

These lines from *The Ancient Mariner* could describe Australia. Surrounded by salty seas the land has a largely dry interior, where some areas receive less than 300mm annually (ABS, 2004) and which cannot (yet) be supplemented by the plentiful seawater available.
Water has always been scarce in this country, as discovered by the first settlers. One of the first jobs undertaken was the sourcing and then directing of water within Sydney town and the spring which led from Hyde Park had convict-made tanks cut into the rock for extra storage, hence its name of the Tank Stream. The convict-architect, Francis Greenway, “arranged for the Tank Stream to be piped underground” (Bligh, 1973, p. 33) allowing for a permanently cool stream of water.

Australians still face increasing water challenges both as gardeners and residents. Water has become scarce within the country from the long standing drought and water restrictions are commonplace within most states. These restrictions encompass car washing, cleaning windows and hard surfaces, pool filling and, of course, watering the plants. As such, the ever-adaptable gardener now needs to amend their long-held gardening practices and evolve into an even more ingenious ‘green thumb’.

This lack of water has impacted on the type of gardens featured in the domestic landscape. Lawns are cut back and woodchip mulch dominates, in some instances from the front of the house to the edge of the road. The gardening media advises how gardeners should reorganise their thinking within this period of water shortage and planting specimens with similar water requirements together is one strategy. Drought tolerant species have never been more popular.

A drive through a new housing estate shows this advice has been taken to heart. Architecturally ‘bare’ beds feature long and slender drought tolerant plants with a pebble skirt for mulch. These gardens are virtually maintenance free. The downside, however, is that they are arguably almost ‘character free’ as well.
An Australian garden style

Within our country there are many styles of architecture, many styles of cars, many styles in fashion, and many design styles of gardens without one truly iconic Australian style, although Aitken (2004) describes the practice of Australian gardeners as “modern pioneer gardening” (p. 11). Many gardeners try to create smaller versions of English gardens in our hot and dry continent. Timms (2006, p. 9) believes this results from our very recent colonial Australian history and that this is the reason “that gardeners here like to create little English Eden’s. It’s not just empty nostalgia: it forms a vital symbolic connection between our personal lives and our cultural origins”. Holmes (1999, p. 162) describes the garden as

“an expression of a relationship between both the past and the present, and between the place, the individual and their culture. It carried specific nationalist overtones: it was to be reflective of Australian gardeners’ ability to carry on traditions brought from Europe, as well as adapt to the possibilities and challenges of gardening in a new and modern world, to ‘capture the spirit of the land in which we live’. The capturing of this spirit, however, entailed the negation of the spirit recognised by the original inhabitants”.

The use of lawns in Australian gardens is described by Cooper (1930 cited in Holmes, 1999, p. 160) as “persistence…in a climate not made for grass plots”. Seddon (1997b, p. 179) reiterates the stubborn passion for lawn as a

“very clear indication of the extent to which garden design is mediated through cultural history. Australia was settled at a time when the dominant social group in Britain was nurtured by a pastoral economy. The lawn is an arcadian remnant”.

This cultural link is evidenced in the description by Holmes in her 1999 paper entitled ‘Gardens (becoming)’ which describes the garden being constructed by Gertrude Bell in Queensland in which she tried planting seedlings of oak and birch in an attempt to recreate a childhood landscape. Climate, however, played a role in the successes and failures of the more delicate English and European plants which appeared to be favoured by those with a “European aesthetic sensitivity” (Holmes, 1999, p. 155).

“In Australia, alone, landscape and gardens reflected contemporary culture and were, therefore, meaningful. Let our gardens grow and change with their makers” (Trimble,
1995, p. 16). Those changes may have evolved from the written word and Timms (2006) argues that our exposure through the press and publishing industries of those informative and gorgeous gardening magazines affects and biases our views of garden style and garden worth. He also suggests that travelling to the great gardens of other cultures has influenced our garden styles which he feels “encouraged to emulate” (p. 11).

Suburbia is an intrinsic part of the Australian culture. Originating from Mother England, Timms (2006) remarks that this “characteristically English phenomenon” (p. 19) of space management is a “direct response to the English Industrial Revolution” (p. 19) and that in the former English colonies of Australia and the United States did suburbia “find its most complete and perfect expression” (p. 19). “From the very beginning”, he writes, “suburbia was at the heart of Australia’s self-identity” (p. 31). Thus the shape and style of the Australian garden began to evolve.

**Backyard bliss**

Front gardens have been classed as the embellishment to a property however it may be argued that the most important part of the Australian garden is the backyard. This more private area of the garden really contains the workings of the property, and it has been described by Aitkin (2004, p. 11) as the “most human and intensely personal of Australian spaces”. The backyard has evolved from the utilitarian area behind the house to “a site of conspicuous consumption”. It is predominantly a practical and functional area used for vegetable growing, children’s play areas and leisure activities.

Seddon (1994) relates how the backyard can be characterised by the contents found within, such as ‘chooks’ (an Australian term for chickens) and ‘Reckitts’ the blueing laundry product once found in every Australian laundry, and notes that this is a representation of the typical Australian backyard. Beilharz (2003) feels that the Australian backyard represents three things:

“it is (1) an economy, (2) nature, i.e. predominantly rural, and (3) it is a culture, and this in two significant, different respects. It is part of a culture of self-sufficiency, and it is a culture of tidiness and order, both understood in the sense of culture as activity” (p. 24).
The emphasis on the backyard as a viable space has been pushed effectively by the media in their blitz of backyard makeover programs. Yet the invasion of “McMansions” and the decreasing size of building blocks are undermining this quintessential Australian icon. Ludlow in the ‘Interwar backyard’ (2003) asserts that it is the backyard, rather than the more public front garden, that reflects changes to technology, affecting the way we live.

“Interwar features such as garages, clothes lines, laundries, outhouses and vegetable gardens are less likely to have survived until today as they fail to meet the demanding requirements of our changing lifestyles.

Interwar garages have been replaced with modernized garages, larger in size; clothes lines replaced with Hills Hoists, retractable clothes lines and electric dryers; tennis courts, lawns and other additional space in the backyard have been swallowed up by swimming pools, barbecues, and entertainment areas, or sacrificed to the imperatives of dual occupancy and medium density housing” (p. 28).

In contrast, Malor (1997), in her paper ‘Backyard Imperatives: Use it or lose it’ describes the backyard as perceived by some as an unused area which many could live without in our modern day lives.

“The backyard is land that is not used, is idle, is not doing its job, a luxury, a space that can be removed from the suburbs without loss of significance of those suburbs, and, by extension, the wider city…With changes in the design of garden artefacts, the backyard has become more garden-like, to be admired for its beauty, its quietness and privacy, and for the nearness to what passes for nature in an urban context, green space” (p. 68).

In regard to the changing nature of this Australian icon, Holmes (1999) claims that gardens are cultural products which are “reflective of particular understandings about class, gender, landscape and national identity” (p. 162). Within the English culture, class is recognised, and behaviour is adjusted appropriately. An example of this is the cottage garden which is traditionally a collection of the common herbs and flowers which would be used within a small home situation for cooking, healing and enhancing their environment and the dramatic gardens of the moneyed estates.

Conversely, Australia is supposedly a class-less society where each citizen technically has the same opportunity to ‘evolve’ into whatever they wish. Gardens, as discussed earlier, could also be deemed ‘class-less’ with their lack of a truly individualistic style which could otherwise ‘identify’ it as an Australian-style garden
design. Many current garden designs focus on the maintenance and lack of physical work over the beauty and constant nurturing often seen within the more detailed and complete plantings within English garden culture. This, no doubt, relates to the climatic difficulties Australian gardeners face to keep their plants alive, never mind thrive.

Many climates and conditions are found within this continent and as such it plays a large role in implementing the many varying plant varieties and planting styles available to landscapers and gardeners. And climate change will play an increasingly dominant role in the way Australians look at their gardens. Choices of planting materials and methods for maintaining have, and will no doubt continue to change as a reaction to the changing climatic conditions, for to remain static would be to unnecessarily continue the struggle that has faced most Australian gardeners since the inception of the colonial settlement.

Climate also plays a large role in the differing \textit{style} of garden, and the possibility that Australian gardens could be affected by droughts, fires, cyclones, floods, the intolerable summer heat and accompanying drying winds needs to be taken into consideration. Creating and maintaining gardens within Australia arguably requires strength of character and sheer determination, and it has been suggested that with the harsh climate and scarcity of water, that Australian’s should give up on creating and nurturing gardens (Broderick, 2007). Aitkin (2004, p. 10) reiterates the climatic hardships. “In Australia where stoicism hides disappointment, planting and pruning according to the seasons is not only hard work but also an act of faith that you’ll have something to show for all your effort of scratching the colonial earth”.

Although climate plays a major role in how Australians garden, it is not the sole aspect that steers the Australian mode of gardening. Plants and gardens may be destroyed, yet gardeners persist. Each incarnation of the garden retains acclimatised plantings and a style ‘type’, but the common thread is a desire to recreate a green vision of beauty and tranquillity. That often this appears rooted in English traditional garden design, conclude Earwaker and Robertson (2003), is due to the fact that the Australian gardening tradition is still in its infancy. It may be argued that our Australian attitudes towards traditional English-style gardens and the reticence to rid
our gardens of this attachment may be retarding the move to a more appropriate style of gardening within this country. Aitken (2004, p. 11) opines that “transplanting English gardening fashion never recreates the original: that is the predicament of gardening in Australia”.

Australian gardens differ greatly from gardens found in the United Kingdom.Whilst British gardens are traditional, Australian gardens are more experimental, “informal, pragmatic, resourceful and gently ironic” (Earwaker and Robertson, 2003, p. ix). I believe that the “experimental” tag and the reference that Australian gardens are still within their infancy are a link back to our colonial past in which there was a continual fear of starvation and self-sufficiency, and following strictly ordered and structured horticultural husbandry practices was the key to the colony’s survival.

**The twenty-first century and beyond: the future of Australian gardens**

Gardens and garden styles have been changing since the first settlement 219 years ago. They have moved from the experimental productive plots of colonial Australia, through the emergence of the pleasure garden period in Australia’s youth and surviving two World Wars in the early twentieth century. Throughout these periods, external influences played major roles within Australian garden design. Australia has become a cosmopolitan country and is recognised as the “worlds’ most multi-ethnic nation” (NIAA, 2001, p. 3) which is reflected within the eclectic and cosmopolitan gardens to be found within its shores. With the beginning of a new century, the Australian horticultural scene began afresh.

**Oz nouveau**

In an attempt to define a distinctly Australian gardening style, the Australian Horticultural Corporation and The Nursery Industry Association of Australia organised a competition in 2001 to “identify new trends in garden design that capture the spirit of the new Australian style and reflect our multicultural heritage” (AHC, 2001; NIAA, 2001). According to NIAA and the HAC:
“there was a feeling that the industry was often playing ‘catch up’ when it came to interpreting and adopting new consumer trends…The winds of change are sweeping through consumer gardening habits with a swing towards structural, designer plants and smaller, low maintenance gardens that are seen as an extra room to the house” (2001, p. 1).

To complement the relaxed Australian lifestyle, Oz nouveau gardens featured paved areas, water-wise plantings, massed plantings for striking instant effects and it insisted that gardeners express their personalities by using colour, fun accessory choices and natural elements. Plant choices were not restricted to exotics or Australian natives, but were designated by ease of growth, bold architectural style and water saving capabilities, thereby reducing the amount of water and time for watering needed in our ‘time-poor’ schedules and ever decreasing dam levels.

Oz nouveau incorporated the themes of the beauty of water, being adventurous, sculptural combinations, the eclecticisms of modern Australia, using outdoor rooms and natural materials, using strong colours of orange, yellow, red and blue, “a touch of larrikinism” and most importantly, the ‘liveability’ of the garden as “people don’t have the time to commit to looking after gardens” (NIAA, 2001). “Oz nouveau is more a state of mind than a particular look; it embraces the attitude of contemporary Australians and our love affair with the outdoors” (Cooke, 2001 in NGIA, 2001, p. 4).

The media spotlight appears to have faded from this innovation and this is arguably indicative of the continuing lack of style within the Australian landscape ‘genre’. Again, these design choices are heavily influenced by the issues of practicality, which I continue to emphasise as an intrinsic part of the ‘Australian way’. This attempt to influence garden preferences is more widely found within the gardening media and few appear exempt from its impact as exposure to gardening makeover programmes was cited as inspiring most gardening activities. Gardening books and magazines also cater for this apparent modern obsession to create the outdoor rooms, formerly known as ‘the garden’.

This obsession has been described by Timms (2006) as “Garden Porn” a fetish which he believes is fuelled by the many magazines, television and printed books which allow gardeners to indulge themselves in gorgeous pictures and accompanying
descriptions aimed at encouraging garden envy – a concept Timms (2006) describes as a “modern plague. We are expected to learn by example and to be shamed into action by the splendid gardens of others, which are presented to us in a state of perfection that we can never hope to match” (p. 94). He describes this fixation which sees one drooling over a beautiful and highly desirable garden and suggests that Britain suffers from this attitude more so than Australia, referring to the snobbishness still attached to garden-making in Britain.

Gardening magazine and television makeover programs have had an enormous effect on the gardening industry (Bhatti & Church, 2001). From the earliest colonial times, Gardener’s Magazine and Register of Rural and Domestic Improvement and the weekly Gardener’s Chronicle by John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843) would explain how to garden and with which plants. Yet this publication was imported to Australia from England and much of the advice was irrelevant to the climate and conditions. Despite the misaligned information, both were still popular magazines, says Timms (2006), who notes that attempts to instigate local versions failed.

Currently there are in excess of 18 gardening magazines on the Australian market catering to interests such as gardening, garden style (such as the English Gardens Illustrated), organic gardening, specialist plant publications, building projects for the garden and other varied topics. This and other information sources, such as television gardening programmes, will remain as the primary source of inspiration to the home gardener. These sources may then serve as the means of establishing an Australian style, should it be fully formulated and its need for dispersion decreed.
Conclusion

Australian gardens had their earliest beginnings rooted in the challenge of transplanting the English style, knowledge and plant materials into a new and unknown country with dramatically different climatic conditions. The limited food supply made these gardens a vital source of survival for the new settlers and as such practical gardening was the primary contact with the soil.

Over two hundred years later, the climatic conditions have not improved, and have possibly even worsened although we now have improved technology to help us cope with the challenges of gardening in Australia. Our enforced approach to gardening as a practical necessity appears to be unshakably attached to our identity and has played an important role in the establishment of that national identity by again providing the necessary means for improving the living standard during two world wars. Tranter and Donoghue (2007) note that the ‘Australian way of life’ has to some extent become a “celebration of the bushman-digger ethos” (p. 166) with an emphasis on physical achievement over intellectual or philosophical achievement.

It could be argued that this practical characteristic, as suggested by Tranter and Donoghue (2007), is so firmly entrenched in our Australian ‘makeup’ that the Anglo-Celtic Australian’s philosophical and spiritual connection to plants, via the garden and nature, has suffered or even been extinguished. The research methodology employed in this thesis was designed to explore this hypothesis and to provide outcomes that inform the debate or the contrasting attitudes to gardens and gardening between English and Anglo-Celtic Australian inhabitants.
Chapter 5

Methodology

“One touch of nature makes the whole world kin”

William Shakespeare
(from Troilus and Cressida, Act III Scene III)

This thesis explores the connection between people and plants within the space of the garden and the activity of gardening. It focuses on emotional responses of participants in light of gardening expertise and cultural background and explores the perceptions of what a garden is, what a garden means and what motivates gardeners.

The methodology

A number of potential challenges were posed whilst conducting this research into the ‘garden within’. Emotions, in particular, do not lend themselves well to traditional research methods because of their unpredictability, the speed at which they occur and change, and the ethics involved. Qualitative interpretive methodologies were used in this research because of the nature of inquiry about emotions experienced. Interpretive methodologies were chosen over empirical methodologies because of “the ‘rich’ nature of enquiry and the relatively small number of participants taking part in the research – a limited number of participants may invalidate statistical
“Analysis” asserts Pearce (2001, p. 11). The use of qualitative research methods is justified, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990) who maintain that:

“Qualitative methods can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is known…Also, qualitative research methods can give the intricate details of phenomena” (p. 19).

Qualitative research has many strengths within its nature (Burns, 1997; Miles and Huberman, 1994). Some advantages of qualitative research are:

- it is a flexible research method which can be adapted and adjusted as themes arise;
- it allows for a deeper understanding of the participants lives and emotions;
- it allows for the humanisation of research and focuses on everyday events in everyday settings (Pearce, 2001).

Shoemaker, Relf and Lohr (2000) believe the qualitative approach:

“seeks to identify the meaning or significance of plants in people’s subjective experiences of their environments. This approach recognizes the importance of emotion, imagination, and the intuition of people’s experience of the natural world” (p. 88).

They define the qualitative researcher as the main instrument for data collection “although he or she is aided by interview schedules, observational diagrams, or predetermined questions” (p. 91).

The emotive nature of this research has led me to a post-positive methodology. This paradigm is just one of the many qualitative research paradigms available to qualitative researchers. Punch (1998) notes that “qualitative research is multidimensional and pluralistic with respect to paradigms. Alternative paradigms within qualitative research are positivism, post-positivism, critical theory and constructivism” (p. 140), and according to Denzin and Lincoln (1994) the development of paradigms within the qualitative framework is still expanding. Alternative paradigms allow researchers to follow a less empirically scientific method while enhancing their research to become a more richly embellished project. O’Leary (2005) tells us that advocates of post-positivism regard the world as “infinitely complex and open to interpretation” (p. 6).
Branching off from the standard and acceptable empirical style of research, post-positivism acknowledges the use of intuitive skills which “are all legitimized as appropriate ways of knowing and exploring the world” (p. 6). Researchers no longer have to distance themselves from the research subjects. Post-positive researchers recognise the value of a collaborative relationship with their research subjects and this approach allows for a more exploratory type of research which is viewed as dependable and auditable.

**Defining the population sample**

The Anglo-Celtic cultures of Australia and England, it may be argued, are one borne from the other, and for this reason I have nominated them as ‘adjacent’ to each other. Both cultures are seen as important internationally, they have interlinking histories and have both attracted migrants to supplement and enhance their populations.

**The population and cultures of Australia**

Australia is a very multicultural nation. The 1996 Census showed that Australians had been born in more than 200 countries (ABS, 2003). There is also a large Anglo-Celtic population (69.9%) within the national population when calculated in 1999 (ABS, 2001b). Until recently, the United Kingdom remained the largest single source country (ABS, 2001b) but with our origins rooted in England, this is not unexpected, however the ‘White Australia Policy’ introduced in 1901 to ensure “that Australia’s immigrants should be not only of European origin but predominantly Anglo-Celtic” (ABS, 2001b) may have also aided the increase in the Anglo-Celtic population found within Australia today. Phillips and Holton (2004) note that at the time of the Australian Federation (1901), “the United Kingdom (including Ireland) was the birthplace of about 80 per cent of overseas-born Australians. At the start of the twenty-first century (2001), we find that this number (excluding the Republic of Ireland) now stands at about 25 per cent (ABS 2002)”.

The dismantling of the White Australia Policy saw a diversification of origins and during the twentieth century the Australian population changed from “an overwhelmingly Anglo-Celtic, homogeneous population in which 95.2% had been
born in Australia, the United Kingdom or Ireland, to one of the worlds’ most multicultural societies by 1996” (ABS, 2001b). Since World War Two approximately 5.7 million people have immigrated to Australia (ABS, 2001a) and in 2001 the most common ancestry reported by people living Australia was Australian (38%), followed by English (36%) (ABS, 2003). This report classified ancestries using the Australian Standard Classification of cultural and Ethnic Groups (see Table 4 below).

Table 4. Ancestries within the Australian Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of people who stated the ancestry</th>
<th>Ancestries in descending order by size (a)(b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.7 million</td>
<td>Australian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 million</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9 million</td>
<td>Irish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500,000 - 999,999</td>
<td>Italian, German, Chinese, Scottish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150,000 - 499,999</td>
<td>Greek, Dutch, Lebanese, Indian, Vietnamese, Polish Maltese, Filipino, New Zealander, Croatian, Serbian, Australian Aboriginal, Welsh, Macedonian, French, Spanish, Maori, Hungarian, Russian, Sinhalese, Turkish, South African American, Korean, Danish, Austrian, Portuguese, Ukrainian, Japanese, Indonesian, Samoan, Egyptian, Swedish, Jewish, Swiss, Chilean, Khmer, Thai, Canadian Latviaian, Iranian, Assyrian/Chaldean, Malay, Finnish, Bosnian, Mauritian, Norwegian, Czech, Fijian, Romanian, Tongan, Armenian, Slovene, Pakistani, Afghan, Anglo-Indian, Lithuanian, Iraqi, Burmese, Albanian, Syrian, Lao Torres Strait Islander, Bengali, Papua New Guinean, Cook Islander, Tamil, Estonian, Slovak, Palestinian, Salvadoran, Argentinean, Timorese, Uruguyan, Somali Peruvian, Kurdish, Taiwanese, Bulgarian, Sudenese, Brazilian, Colombian, Australian South Sea Islander, Coptic, Ethiopian, Nepalese, Zimbabwean, Jordanian, Hispanic (North American)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000 - 9,999</td>
<td>Timorese, Uruguyan, Somali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,500 - 4,999</td>
<td>Peruvian, Kurdish, Taiwanese, Bulgarian, Sudenese, Brazilian, Colombian, Australian South Sea Islander, Coptic, Ethiopian, Nepalese, Zimbabwean, Jordanian, Hispanic (North American)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2,500</td>
<td>70 other ancestries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) As up to two ancestries were coded per person, these groups are not mutually exclusive.
(b) Includes specific ancestries only, excludes residual categories such as Other British.
Source: ABS 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Source: ABS, Australian Social Trends, 2003
With this in mind, it is important to note that England is also an extremely multicultural country with many cultures residing there. The 2001 Annual Population Survey reported the United Kingdom’s population as being made up of 92.1% White with the remaining 7.9% formed from the following nationalities: Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Other Asian, Black Caribbean, Black African, Black Other, Chinese, and Other (see Appendix 1). The variety of cultures within both nations gives rise to their own set of cultural customs and traditions.

This, too, is true of gardening practices, as we see in papers by Graham and Connell (2006), Power (2005) and Morgan, Rocha and Poynting (2005) which describe cultural differences of European, English and Asian gardeners that have migrated to Australia, but bring their gardening principals and practices with them to their new gardens. Power (2005) describes the issues faced by the new arrivals in their gardens and how their views on gardening have altered since arriving in Australia.

Because the main core of immigrants to Australia were English, and as Australia was essentially ‘borne’ from Mother England, it was decided to focus on the Anglo-Celtic link within each country, how that Anglo-Celtic path found its way into Australia and any residual Anglo-Celtic sense of belonging demonstrated by actions and emotions of the chosen Anglo-Celtic participants.

The term ‘Anglo-Celtic’ appears to have several definitions in use. The Macquarie Dictionary defines it as “pertaining to a person whose origin was in the British Isles”. Other definitions appear to accept Anglo-Celtic as a term relating to people of English descent, “and recognises both the cultural fusion of early Australian settler society and the resultant large demographic role of people who are of Irish, Scottish, Welsh, English, Cornish and Manx ethnic backgrounds” (Wikipedia, 2007).

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Anglo-Celtic refers to the ethnic majority, around 85% of the Australian population (ABS, 2003).

The term ‘Anglo-Australian’ is defined as:

“1. belonging or relating to, or connected with England and Australia, or with the people of both. 2. pertaining to the English who have settled in Australia, or have become Australian citizens. 3. a native or descendent of a native of England who has settled in Australia, or who has become an Australian

For the purposes of this study the term Anglo-Celtic refers to one with either direct English descent or one linked to Anglo-Celtic England through colonisation of Australia.

**Do traditions travel?**

As seen in Chapter 3, the Australian colony was first populated by convicts and free traders from England. These new settlers brought with them limited food, clothing, building materials and resources to create a new life for themselves and in many cases to serve out their terms before becoming “free” Australian citizens. Included with all this material baggage, were the skills and tradition of years of English history. These were valuable additions to the new Colony, and as noted previously, there was little material wealth in the new settlement, but the traditional wealth, if they had but known, was a veritable hoard.

Each of us has particular ways of doing things, the ways, habits and methods often being passed down from parents to child, and in this way we often ‘absorb’ tradition rather than consciously learn it. These absorbed traditions need not be complex tasks or texts, rather more simple methods of planting, or preparing food, or even something as mundane as hanging washing on a clothesline. How we hang washing is something that is absorbed by watching, learning from and helping another with this task, and as such, knowing that way as the natural way of doing something. It can be seen how this type of tradition is passed down the generations, with mere modifications, but essentially the same methods. The suggestion that these traditions can occur in both a philosophical and physical sense, and that English migrants settling in Australia bring traditions and familiar behaviours with them will form an important part of this research and this is the reason for the limiting of the research population to those of an English, Anglo-Celtic heritage.
**National identities**

Population statistics provide a very flat view of a culture. Cultural anecdotes, caricatures or stereotypes, give us a richer and more concentrated understanding of their individual characteristics and national identities, possibly providing clues to certain behaviour patterns. Of these, Palmer (2005) defines national identity as “a combination of elements such as religion, political ideology, historic memories, myths, symbols and traditions” (p. 428). She believes that views or traditional characteristics are important “since ‘heritage’ is one of the most powerfully imaginative forces due to its association with the notion of historical inheritance” (p. 428).

Every nation has its population stereotypes – whether identified as the Aussie larrikin or the valiant Englishman. According to Phillips and Holton (2004) much work has been achieved recently to address questions relating to identity, the majority of which related to culturally different countries rather than countries which are culturally ‘similar’ as Australia and England are. I will, however, only dip briefly into this issue of national identity to add colour to the responses of the participants. “Nationness”, according to Connor (1993 cited in Palmer, 2005, p. 10) is an intimate state that is “based upon emotion not reason, it is experienced as a feeling that ‘we’ are a nation, ‘we’ belong together, ‘we’ are all related in some way, intuitively rather than biologically”.

**The definition and manifestation of ‘Englishness’**.

‘Stiff upper lip’ is a well known phrase to describe the strength and solidity of the gallant British character. Although frequently spoken in colloquial language terms, it raises the question of the identity of the typically English traits. History shows us that the English have a long ancestry, traceable back to the small developed settlements at around 4500-3000 BCE and that the earliest henges were built around 3300-1200 BCE (BBC, 2007), with the Angles and Saxons arriving in South Eastern Britain around 449 CE. The richness of historical background contributes to the way English people form opinion and view the world. Palmer (2005) states that the English identity “is in some way primordial, with fixed and unchanging aspects of identity that can be handed down through the generations” (p. 9).
The terms ‘England’ and ‘English’ appears interchangeable with the British Isles or one who hails from them (Palmer, 2005). “Despite the fact that England is merely one of the nations, regions, and ethnic groups within Great Britain, there is a long tradition of use whereby English and British are seen as synonymous terms” (Aslet 1997 cited in Palmer 2005, p. 8). This confusion in terms in not a new phenomenon, according to MacColl (2006), who in his paper “The Meaning of ‘Britain’ in Medieval and Early Modern England”, explains how the earliest of the British countries, whether English, Scottish or Welsh, were all consolidated under the umbrella of ‘England’. This tradition, he notes, also ran parallel to another. “The notion of an ancient British heritage had such a powerful hold on the English imagination that ‘Britain’ came to be identified with the kingdom of England itself, in explicit distinction from Wales and Scotland” (p. 2).

MacColl (2006) suggests that these seemingly interchangeable terms for England hark back to the observations of medieval historians who referred to ‘Britain’, which was once called Albion but is now named England, as a synonym for the entire island and that the term ‘Great Britain’ entered local parlance as to denote specifically the entire nations of England, Scotland and Wales, rather than just ‘British’ England (MacColl, 2006). One may even argue that the longevity of England’s culture is reflected in the stable, gentlemanly and monarchical characteristics commonly associated with this Northern Hemisphere country. In terms of this research though, it is the Anglo-Celtic tradition and the possible continuance of its myths and events that are featured.

**The Aussie battler – a survivalist mentality?**

Although the history of white colonial Australia is vastly shorter than English history, it does not diminish the Australian nationalistic feeling and pride in their country. Travellers to countries overseas display Australian flags to denote their heritage, the ANZAC spirit seems to grow each year with numbers increasing at dawn services both in Australia and at Gallipoli (DVA, 2006; Bastiaan, 2007), and *cooee* denotes a true-blue and fair dinkum Australian identity and mateship. This “functional colonial bush call” has taken on “nationalist meanings” and has found its way into our Australian national lingo (White, 2001, p. 109) from its original
Aboriginal usage to modern day parlance. This light hearted approach to life is in complete contrast to the turmoils experienced by Australia and Australians in its short 200 year history.

Yet the tragedies and misfortunes have engendered a survivalist fighting spirit within Australian myths and this survivalist spirit lingers on, from its earliest beginnings at colonialisation to the modern day as can be seen by the term “little Aussie Battler” which has become entrenched in our modern day vernacular. The Australian myths I refer to are the myths ‘created’ by the Anglo-Celtic colonial settlers, from the time of white settlement to the present day. Australia has much older myths, however these exist in the domain of the indigenous Aboriginals, and as their way of life, survival, and philosophies were thought to be worthless by the new colonials, the Aboriginal myths and legends were not explored and not recognised. The focus of the new settlement was to survive in a harsh new landscape and one may argue that a survival mentality has evolved and turned our views towards practical aspects over philosophical aspects. This survival mechanism has caused the prioritisation of our thoughts and emotions and is therefore one area of investigation within this research project.

It is these interesting differences in cultural ‘ancient’ history, cultural ‘modern’ history and the story of how we got from ‘then’ to ‘now’ that bolstered the desire to explore the way two different countries, one virtually borne from the other, view something as emotional and personal as a relationship with gardens, gardening and the ‘green world’. To test this initial and very basic hypothesis, I explored the realms of garden publications to see where each country was represented in this natural offshoot of gardening, the results of which can be found in Chapter 6.
Research population and sample

To discover the outcomes of the research questions this project targeted gardeners of Anglo-Celtic origin within both Australia and England. Voluntary participants were recruited for involvement in the research project. There were no research restrictions regarding age or sex of the participants. The only specific requirement was that the participants have at least a second generation heritage of their country of birth to ascertain ethnicity. This did not present as a problem as the sample were self selecting and were all within the requisite specifications upon recruitment.

Why the participants were chosen

“In people-plant research, researchers must determine in advance which people will be the appropriate subjects and then a sampling procedure may be used to select the subjects” (Shoemaker, Relf and Lohr, 2000, p. 88). Purposive sampling was used when choosing participants. This is a method in which “the participants who are best suited to provide a full description of the research topic are intentionally selected” (Gerbert et al, 1999, p. 578). Although this is a non-random approach, and possibly viewed by traditional scientists as inferior, O’Leary (2005) believes that non-random sampling “can credibly represent populations” (p. 109). She explicates the benefits of handpicking participants in that your sample is selected with a particular goal in mind and that “the selection of such cases allows researchers to study intrinsically interesting cases, or enhance learning by exploring the limits or boundaries of a situation or phenomenon” (p. 110).

In this research project, the first group of participants were selected from groups that either worked or were involved professionally in the field of horticulture or have some other close professional association with plants and nature. Participants from both Australia and from the United Kingdom were selected. To distinguish these participants from the non-professional group, this group was referred to the professional group.
The professions of the participants used within this study included garden historians, horticultural journalists and authors, horticultural and garden trades people, horticultural academics, a garden tourism guide, a manager of large public gardens, an environmentalist/folklorist and nature folklorist. The English group consisted of one female and four men. Two participants were in the 30-45 age bracket and three were in the 46-60 age bracket. The Australian group consisted of three females and two males. Two were in the 30-45 age bracket and three were in the 46-60 age bracket.

Chosen participants for the professional group were contacted directly by the principal researcher for their individual specialties which are valuable to the research question and invited to participate in the interview module of the research project. Where a sole individual wasn’t identified by the researcher, their organisation was contacted for their specialty and a request for contact assistance was made.

The second group of participants had an entirely ‘lay’ or hobbyist view of gardening. Participants were therefore non-professional ‘lay-persons’ who purely had an interest in gardens, gardening or in nature, and were not and had never been involved in gardening in a professional or semi-professional capacity. Community garden clubs and horticultural societies were approached for volunteers to participate in the research study, and again, the participants were sourced both from Australia and England. Most of the volunteer participants were women and this is consistent with Bhatti and Church’s (2001) findings that showed a higher response of women to men in participation interest and consent.

In the search for the lay group of participants, the researcher made contact with the management committee of a NSW garden club and requested their help in recruiting voluntary participants. The Australian group of lay participants consisted of five females and one male, two being in the 46-60 age bracket and four in the 61+ age bracket. The Australian lay participants’ gardens were located in zones 3-4 (see Figure 5) and were generally on quarter acre blocks with the exception of one three quarter acre garden. The English group from Lincolnshire consisted of two females and three males, one in the 46-60 age bracket and the remaining four in the 61+ age bracket. One English couple had a garden of one acre whereas all other English
participants had gardens of approximately one sixth of an acre. Overall, the gardens of the lay participants’ gardens were of a similar size. The garden sizes of the professional participants were not collected because of their professional and not personal link with gardens and gardening.

Details of participants’ educational levels were not sought as it was the innate responses from lay gardeners that were being explored within this study. Financial information was also not gathered in the interviews as this may have been considered as potentially invasive on a personal level. It was felt that this may cause discomfort to the participant, in turn possibly altering the quality and quantity of emotions and information given by the participants during the interviews. Although the financial status of participants was not sought, all lay participants resided in single dwelling homes in pleasant suburban areas and were regarded to be within the ranges of middle to upper class. Exploring gardeners from the middle to upper class areas was deemed necessary as families from lower class demographics may not have had the opportunity to garden, own a garden or have the time to participate in garden or gardening activities. Therefore garden club members were identified as the desired participants for this study, as their membership demonstrated a more formal commitment of time (and possibly finances) to gardens and gardening.

The decision to invite both professional and lay participants to take part in this project was to explore the effect of learned or innate responses on the reported attitudes and emotions experienced during the research process. Ulrich (1986) criticises purely expert-based systems as possibly lacking in reliability and sensitivity and he asserts that they contravened the (then) US government policies which required input from groups of laypersons as “studies based on the aesthetic responses of groups of laypersons can constitute an important form of public participation in decision-making, whether the setting is wilderness or urban” (Ulrich, 1986, p. 31).

**How the participants were chosen**

To elicit information as part of this qualitative study, a group of 21 participants was recruited to reflect on gardens, gardening and their experience of connecting with
nature and the ‘green world’. The participants were chosen for either their professional involvement or lay involvement with gardens and the green world, and as such were asked to reflect on their ‘green world’ experiences and how they perceived their emotions in this ‘connected’ environment. A group of 21 participants contributed to the study, which allowed for in depth exploration of the subject matter. A small number of participants was deemed desirable as this permitted a more thorough and personal investigation using qualitative methodologies. Larger numbers are generally only needed for statistical analysis and this was deemed inappropriate for this type of research due to the qualitative and not quantitative nature of the research where the emotions and emotional responses were the data being collected. According to Macnaghton and Urry (cited in Bhatti & Church, 2001, p. 374) “relations based on large scale surveys often fail to capture the range of ways nature is sensed and experienced in any particular location”.

**Contacting the participants**

Participants were contacted by email, telephone, fax or mail, and given information outlining the basic concept of the project. At that initial contact with the intended participants, I explained they type of research I was undertaking, about the search for voluntary participants and why their contribution could be valuable to the project. One important factor that was investigated before requesting their help was of their family background. Because of the comparison scheduled between Australian gardeners and English gardeners, I asked for the nationalities of the potential participants, their parents and their grandparents. Contact and mail details were obtained at this point if participants wished to be involved and an information package was then dispatched containing a formal letter of introduction, Plain Language Statement and consent form (see Appendix 2).

Issues such as anonymity, confidentiality, security of storage, ethical considerations and the need for consent, how the information would be gained via a recorded interview and photo-elicitation session, how the resulting information would be used, and the time and comfort factor of the participants were discussed. The basic tenet of the project - that I was exploring our feelings about gardens and gardening, and as a gardener I was interested in obtaining their views – was also discussed, but a
decision was made to refrain from revealing too much detail because of the concern that this may bias the participant’s responses in favour of the researcher’s interests (Minichiello, 1995).

**Components of the research**

Information about the human responses to gardens and gardening was collected from different sources to maximize validity and to ensure the reliability of the data.

In total, seven sources of evidence were gathered for analysis as part of this thesis, six of which were collected through interaction with participants from Australia and England.

![Image](image_url)

*Figure 7. The seven components of the research to discover ‘The Garden Within’.*
Methods of data collection and data analysis

From the beginning of this research project with its initial informal discussions through to the literature analysis, two themes of ‘doing’ and ‘experiencing’ within a garden kept reappearing consistently. It was decided to use this consistent recurrence within the research questions and to investigate whether the anecdotal evidence corroborated the collected research data. After analysis of the initial data collected, descriptors have been devised to encapsulate the root of these two themes and these are:

- *spiritual* (a non-physical/non-practical relationship with the garden or immediately adjoining green world) and
- *physical* (a physical and/or practical participation with the garden or immediately adjoining green world).

Using these concepts helped to illustrate how the participants viewed their place within the garden or within the practice of gardening. They were able to ground themselves within either a predominantly ‘practical’ or ‘spiritual/philosophical’ association.

Numerous evidentiary sources were generated to test this hypothesis. Sources included interviews and written responses (booklets containing a photo-elicited emotional response inventory, image preference rating, scale rating statement, emotions sphere and arousal matrices) plus a cross-cultural analysis of literary publications. This combination of information collection methods was valuable in adding ‘richness’ to the elicited data. Interpretations are then able to be tested by further data generation in future studies which build on the initial study and eventually may lead to substantive theory grounded in data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The interpretation of the results was aided by a triangulation approach which allowed me to draw on several sources of data to provide understanding.

Some quantitative data was also collected in the form of statement rating scales and picture preference ratings. Miles and Huberman (1984) argue that “qualitative and
quantitative paradigms are neither philosophically mutually exclusive nor operationally incompatible” (p. 25). Cohen and Manion (1996) suggest that using multiple methods within research allows researchers to gain a more complete picture of behavioural and interactive qualities of humans.

**Document analysis: gardening publications in Australia and England.**

As an initial investigation into the recurring themes of ‘spiritual’ and ‘physical’ orientations within gardens and gardeners, both the Australian and English publishing markets were explored to assess the popularity of gardening titles and the areas within the gardening genre that they explored.

**Data collection**

Lifestyle surveys undertaken in both Australia and England confirm that gardening is one of the most popular hobbies (Euromonitor International, 2006a; Euromonitor International, 2006b) and gardening publications are an increasingly popular offshoot to this phenomenon, as is the ever increasing number of television gardening and makeover programs (Bhatti & Church, 2001).

Gardening publications are available in many forms such as books, magazines, conference proceedings, trade publications and pamphlets. Initial informal discussions with both Australian and English gardeners led me to the observation that these two cultures had different ideas about gardens, gardening and varying depths of emotions about how gardens, gardening and the ‘green world’ affected them. This observation then led me to explore the gardening literature that was being published in both countries as an initial step in this thesis study. If individual countries have individual perceptions about gardens and gardening, exploring the types and numbers of publications originating from those countries could help generate any apparent differences, making them more visible to the researcher. A suitable vehicle to facilitate this type of discovery was found in the national libraries of both Australia and England, and within these two institutions I was able
to investigate the publishing statistics of both countries for the Dewey Decimal numbers 635.09 (Garden Crops – Horticulture) and 635.9 (Flowers and Ornamental Plants). After trawling the shelves and the sizeable Dewey Decimal catalogues, these Dewey Decimal numbers were deemed to cover the subjects earmarked for investigation and were therefore valuable for this research.

The National Library of Australia (NLA) and the British National Library (BNL) were chosen to provide the information as these national libraries are required to catalogue and hold a copy of each work published within its own individual country. Both Britain (under the British Copyright and Related Act 2000) and Australia (Copyright Act of 1968, Section 201) have legal requirements outlining the deposit of a copy of each published work (from within its own country) to the national library of that country within one month of publication. The NLA therefore holds an extensive catalogued collection of literary works and documents published within Australia, and the BNL, my source for the English publications, holds a catalogue of all books published within England.

**Background to analysis of publications**

After studying the Dewey Decimal listings it was decided to focus the enquiry on the numbers 635.09 and 635.9 as these classification numbers covered the largest areas of horticulture for the purposes of this study. Online catalogues were accessed with the help of the individual librarians for each library and after searching the catalogues a total of 3555 records of both Australian collection and overseas publications were retrieved. From the records displayed, those published within Australia were listed as Australian collection.

The same process was initiated within the BNL online catalogue. The search utilised the COPAC search system which includes catalogues of all UK National libraries within the BNL catalogue. Using the COPAC system involved a search through five versions of the DD system due to the English library catalogue structure and several upgrades within that system for the years being explored. The search parameters therefore included DD versions 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22. Each of these versions (except for version 22) yielded varying number of results which required cross checking to
eliminate repeated titles. Once elicited, the data was tabulated and the results were examined.

The origin of the publication was important and some were only listed as ‘This title has several holdings’. These were initially selected, with a portion being later rejected when their ‘foreign’ origins were ascertained. Subjects and types of literature were grouped together following the exploration of the types of publications emerging from both countries.

The listings were then entered into a spreadsheet under one of seven subsections: ‘How to’, philosophical, magazines, trade/professional, club/society, catalogues and proceedings, depending on the individual publication details. The subsections were determined by analysing the titles returned from the literature search through this Dewey Decimal system. The Gardening How-to section covered gardening books published within that country that taught, illustrated or listed ways of growing - the practical side of gardening literature. The philosophical section covered gardening books published within Australia of a philosophical or essay nature. Magazines covered Australian periodicals and lifestyle magazines. Trade/Professional includes associations such as AQIS, HRDC, Horticulture Australia, State departments of Agriculture, TAFE and Council publications. Club/Society includes publications and newsletters for garden clubs, societies and individual species clubs, such as the Society for Growing Australian Plants. Catalogues lists catalogue years and Proceedings covers published conference documents and proceedings.

Each Australian and English publication was listed by the publishing year under separate headings. Noting the years was to discover whether there was a turning point from ‘philosophical’ to ‘how to’ and to compare the volume of Australian gardening ‘how to’ and ‘philosophical’ publications to British publications of the same subjects.

**Data analysis of the document analysis**

Following the catalogue search the groups of ‘How to’, Trade/Professional, Club/Society, Catalogues and Proceedings were combined to form the ‘Practical’
publication grouping and the Philosophical group remained on its own. The
Magazines group was reconsidered as the subject matter within that group was too
varied to define it accurately. For this reason it has been calculated within the final
workings but is listed under ‘Other’.

Publications were organised into their groups and the total number of titles under
each heading listing was calculated. A percentage for each category was calculated
and the percentage added to the comparative table.

This process was repeated for several types of comparison. Information was
collected and collated for the Dewey Decimal number 635.09+ Australian and
English, 635.9 Australian and English, for the total publications of 635.9 + 635.09+
for Australia, the total publications of 635.9 + 635.09+ for England, and the total
publications or 635.9 + 635.09+ for Australia and England. All the data was
publications relating to the period 1993-2003.

The results, which are discussed in Chapter 6, justified further investigation. It was
decided that interviewing nationals from England and Australians with Anglo-Celtic
heritage should render further insights into the emotional essence to gardens and
gardening from each culture.
Meeting the participants

It was decided that the further exploration of the phenomenon of practical and philosophical or spiritual orientation within gardeners and gardening would be best served by interviewing those that interacted with horticulture, gardens or gardening.

Meetings were scheduled and within the meeting a personal interview was conducted and a booklet containing supportive research components was completed by each participant. The entire meeting lasted approximately 60-90 minutes and in general, the completion of the booklet took around 30-40 minutes.

The interview process

Individual interviews were held to ascertain and elicit emotion responses from all participants taking part in this research project. This form of information collection “lends itself to being used alongside other methods as a way of supplementing their data – adding detail and depth” (Denscombe, 1998, p. 112). Shoemaker, Relf and Lohr (2000) concur and add that the qualitative nature of personal interviews allows the research to probe the participant’s response if the answer is unclear or is suggesting “unique insights or observations” (p. 91).

According to Punch (2005) interviewing is a good method of educing the participant’s “perceptions, meanings, definitions of situations and constructions of reality. “It is also one of the most powerful ways we have of understanding others” (p. 174). He explicates the flexibility and adaptability of the interview technique and notes that interviews can be adapted to varying situations within this type of information elicitation. “Different types of interview have different strengths and weaknesses, and different purposes in research. The type of interview selected should therefore be alighted with the strategy, purposes and research questions” (p. 176). I used a semi-structured interview strategy which allowed me to explore in-depth and responses from this in-depth questioning added flesh to my interview ‘skeleton’ of several pre-determined questions.
The format of the interview followed the recursive model of interviewing, which allows the interviewer to achieve two purposes: it allows the interview to develop into a more conversational format, which in turn, lets the researcher to treat each participant and circumstance uniquely (Minichiello, 1995; Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979). According to Minichiello (1995), this form of questioning is “close to the ideal form of research for those researchers who follow the interpretive approach” (p. 81) and fits the methodology inherent in research utilizing a qualitative approach.

The interaction in each interview directs the research process.

“Recursive questioning relies on the process of conversational interaction itself, that is, the relationship between a current remark and the next one. The researcher chooses how to use this method to best effect. This choice occurs at two levels. First, the interviewer needs to decide to what extent prior interaction in an interview session should be allowed to determine what is asked next. Secondly, the interviewer needs to decide on the extent to which the experiences and information of previous interview sessions with an informant or group of informants ‘be allowed to determine the structure and content of current interviews’” (Seaman cited in Minichiello, 1995, p. 80).

This allows the interviewer to determine how recursive the interview is to be.

Recursive interviews allow the interviewer to start with a theme (and therefore set the scene) before following the themes which emerge from the elicited response narrative.

Critics of this model of interviewing comment on the possibility of the interview moving away from the point in hand, however these tangential episodes can also lead to useful information which may otherwise remain undiscovered and unexplored. The key is to return to the ‘loose’ schedule of interview questions by using a transition question which recaptures the participant’s thoughts and returns them to the question in hand.

**Interviewing the participant groups**

The interviews in this study were recorded and this is a common method of “obtaining a full and accurate record of the interview” (Minichiello, 1995, p. 98). Recording the interview allowed me to concentrate fully on the opinions and thoughts being expressed by the participant. It also gave me the opportunity to revisit the interview at a later date by listening to the recording. Schwartz & Jacob (1979)
emphasize the point that because the information is still available in the exact format and language in which the participant expressed it, the information can be subjected to greater analytical depth. A recorded interview is considered to give a more accurate representation of the interview as both questions and answers have been recorded, thus “validity is enhanced by this preservation of authentic data” (Minichiello, 1995, p. 98). Recordings were transcribed by myself and stored within the ethics committee guidelines outlined by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. Non-verbal data, such as pauses, were noted for inclusion within the transcript as these can add credence to the verbal message given by the participant.

The interviews with professional participants

Meetings with this group took place in a variety of places, including homes, places of work, a café and on a park bench. Prior to beginning the interview I recapped the confidentiality and storage issues with each of the participants and asked if they had any questions or issues they wished to raise before commencing their interview.

The professionals were asked a series of questions which were predetermined but not always asked in the same order. Order was dependent on the previous answer and how best I could maximise the information given by choosing carefully the following question as “new questions were expected to emerge as personal experiences and feelings were recounted” (Collier, 1957, p. 848). The professional group were asked additional specific questions relating to their speciality and therefore the reason they were chosen.

The supplementary data collection booklet (containing the photo-elicited emotional response inventory, image preference rating, scale rating statement, emotions sphere and arousal matrices), a CD containing the colour pictures of the eight garden scenes and a stamped, self-addressed enveloped was posted to this group at a separate time to minimise the time spent with the researcher and away from their office duties. These were completed by the professional participants and returned using the self-addressed envelopes. On average, the booklet took 20-30 minutes to complete.
The interviews with the ‘lay’ participants

Each of the lay participants, both Australian and English, elected to undertake the interview session in their own home. On arrival at their home, the outline of how the session would run was reiterated and participants’ understanding of this was checked. For the first part of the interview the participants were asked to answer as fully as they could questions which were pre-determined by me. Although they were arranged as a list on my ‘script’ they could be asked in any order but always beginning with the question “are you a gardener?” This often elicited a short response, but occasionally this question led to a further and more comprehensive answer. At times, it was found to make the next question redundant (“at which stage in your life did you begin gardening?”) as several participants were to include this in their narrative issuing from the first question. Another question (“Were your parents or grandparents gardeners – either as a hobby or professionally?”) was also answered several times within the narrative produced from the original question.

From that point the question order was determined by the response from the previous question and I found, as Burgess (1984) did, “the order in which they occurred was different in each interview as these…had considerable freedom to develop strategies for answering my questions” (p. 108). Minichiello (1995) concurs with this, noting that the conversations within the interview determine the order of questions and answers.

Several of the questions followed a sensory theme, in the typology of Williams and Harvey (2001), where I ask the participant to recall a memory of an experience with nature, their garden or gardening past. Sensory questions are asked “in an attempt to induce informants to describe ‘the stimuli to which they are subject’” (Minichiello, 1995, p. 89). Another of the questions asked the participant to describe how the garden made them feel. This engenders further sensory responses allowing the researcher to build a profile of the participant/gardener. Whatever the order of the previous questions, the question “how does the garden make you feel” was always followed by the question asking them if it is the garden or the activity of gardening which they attribute to the emotion experienced, thus placing themselves into a
category (determined by the researcher and unknown to the participant) of practical/physical or spiritual/philosophical.

The advent of these practical/physical and spiritual/philosophical categories came from initial discussions prior to the commencement of research but were confirmed by the literature analysis of gardening publications.

**The interview questions**

One important question asks participants to describe the garden of their dreams. Their task was to verbally ‘illustrate’ the type of garden they would have with the brief that there were no restrictions as to size, location, topography, design, inclusions, plant materials, climate and finances. In short, they could have anything they wanted, any way and anywhere they wanted it. Each participant was then invited to share their vision with me.

Responses from this question indicate the importance people place on the use of the landscape, how people view gardens and what they visualise as important in a garden. Any contrasts within the responses from the Australian participants and English participants are valuable in determining their ‘gardens within’.

Questions concerning the participant’s knowledge of gardens and plants in history were asked to ascertain their level of awareness to gardens and gardening. The responses will also be used to place them in the categories of practical/physical or spiritual/philosophical. There were also several other questions asked which would allow the researcher to categorize them.

Two of the most important questions asked of the participants were:

- What is it that attracts people to gardening?

and

- What is it that attracts people to gardens?

These two questions are often mistaken as interchangeable however they are two separate entities in themselves. By asking these questions, I was hoping to discover
why people gardened; was it the physical enjoyment, for exercise purposes, or was it for the aesthetic purposes of ‘keeping up with the Joneses’? The second question, asking what attracted people to gardens as places was important as it would help to identify what parts of the garden the participants thought were the most important. This answer, together with the answer to the question asking for their dream garden ‘ingredients’, helps determine the properties seen as important to gardeners and garden visitors.

At the conclusion of the lay interviews, each participant in both England and Australia invited me to view their gardens, reinforcing to me the pride and ‘affection’ each gardener had for their garden.

**Analysing the personal interviews**

Information received from the verbal interviews and from booklet completion had the valuable data extracted a using thematic elicitation form of qualitative data analysis. Coding is one form of qualitative data analysis (Shoemaker, Relf and Lohr, 2000) and themes and subgroups can be sourced from exploring the interview transcripts and data. The aim of coding, according to Burnard (1991) is to “produce a detailed and systematic recording of the themes and issues addressed in the interviews and to link the themes and interviews together under a reasonably exhaustive category system” (p. 462).

There are two main forms of coding: manual and computer assisted coding. A decision was made to use a manual coding method over a computer assisted program. Information received through the interview process was to be interpreted manually by drawing theme groups from responses given. The advantages of using a manual approach are that there is more ability for depth of understanding and ‘meaning’ which may be inadvertently overlooked by a computerised program which values quantity over quality (St. John and Johnson, 2000). Another advantage is that collected data which is not textual can still be useful within the manual coding system. The disadvantages, however, include the administrative difficulties in keeping track of lists, code words and other associated paperwork.
Once the interviews had been transcribed, the transcripts were explored for keywords within each interview question using Mason’s method of interpretive manual cross-sectional indexing (Mason, 1996, p.111) a form of analysis that incorporates coded thematic data (i.e. information gained from interviews) with categorised data, which in this study comprises the emotions inventory, image preference ratings, scale rating statements, emotions sphere and arousal matrices. These were collected and collated onto one of many lists for comparison (Shoemaker, Relf and Lohr, 2000). Further readings allowed for the development of “concepts and codes on a higher level of abstraction” (Rice and Ezzy, 1999, p. 199). Once initial categories have been determined, “coding on” (Marshall, 2002) or the refining of categories could occur.

**The supplementary data collection booklet**

For a fuller investigation into the research questions, a supplementary booklet was devised which comprised five other components to complement and supplement the information received from the personal interviews. Within this research booklet were the tables for the Photo-Elicited Emotional Response Inventory, Image Preference Rating chart, a series of eight Scale Rating Statements, a self-devised Emotions Sphere, and two arousal matrices for completion (see Appendix 3).

**Photo-elicitation: painting a picture with words**

Photographs were used in this research project to provide a standardised image for participants in both Australia and England. Photographs are not just useful within a research situation, they are also a source of treasured memories to many people. They can remind us of situations, of emotions, and can provide clear recollections of the sights, sounds and smells in the surrounding space.

“The thrill found in a photograph comes from the onrush of memory. This is obvious when it’s a picture of something we once know…But in another sense, we once knew everything we recognize in any photo. That’s grass growing. The tiles on a roof get wet like that, don’t they” (Berger, 1992, p. 192).

Extracting information from participants using photographs is known as photo-elicitation (Harper, 2002). This method is used to enhance the responses from the participants – enhancement coming from the ease of recall of an emotion, prompted by the picture in front of them. Thus, memory plays a part in the response
mechanism and, according to Broderick (2006) the areas within the brain associated with processing memory are also involved in processing emotions. Compared to text-based research, image-based research has kept a low profile (Loeffler, 2004) and image-based research has been underrated and under-used (Harper, 1998; Prosser, 1998). Photographs capture a moment in time which is a constant for all participants, not varying with season or time of day, making the scene more stable and comparable for all. They can also capture the “many elements of the emotional currents within situations that are involved in a man’s reactions to his cultural circumstance” (Collier, 1957, p. 844). Harper (1986) describes photo elicitation as thus:

“In the photo-elicitation interview the informant and the interviewer discuss photographs the researcher has made of the setting, giving the interview a concrete point of reference…This method provides a way in which the interview can move from the concrete (a cataloguing of the objects in the photograph) to the socially abstract (what the objects in the photograph mean to the individual being interviewed). The individual being interviewed comes to a level of understanding, as would anyone confronted by a photographic study of his or her social world that probably did not exist prior to the interview” (Harper, 1986, p. 25).

It is common to use and rate photographs in determining landscape preferences and “preference studies generally produce reliable, consistent, and believable results” (Shoemaker, Relf & Lohr, 2000, p. 90). Using photographs as data generators (Schwartz, 1989) within the research paradigm allows for the collection of the emotions and experiences of the research participants when time, travel, seasonal and physical constraints do not allow for participants to visit the chosen setting. This was particularly useful in this research project as participants were situated in several areas within two separate countries in different hemispheres. All participants, whether professionals, lay, English or Australian, viewed the same photographic images and were therefore able to give comparable responses during the elicitation interviews.

Collier (1957) describes the camera as “an automatic device which can permanently engrave the visual impression of an instant and can also compensate in various ways for the shortcomings attributed to human impression” (p. 844). Photography and time are intertwined, according to the vivid description by Walker and Kimball-Moulton (1989) as “the act of photography anticipates the future by ripping the appearance of
a moment out of its time, creating a tangible image of the future of what will be the past” (p. 157). Harper (2002) avers that

“photo elicitation mines deeper shafts into a different part of human consciousness than do words-alone interviews. It is partly due to how remembering is enlarged by photographs and partly due to the particular quality of the photograph itself” (Harper, 2002, p. 23).

According to Harper in his 2002 paper ‘Talking about pictures: a case for photo elicitation’ participants respond to images and text differently when compared to using text alone and he suggests this is due to the ways humans respond “to these two forms of symbolic representation” (p. 13). He explains that this has a physiological basis:

“The parts of the brain that process visual information are evolutionarily older than the parts that process verbal information. Thus images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness that do words; exchanges based on words alone utilize less of the brain’s capacity than do exchanges in which the brain is processing images as well as words” (p. 13).

Harper then asserts that this may explain why the “photo elicitation interview seems like not simply an interview process that elicits more information, but rather one that evokes a different kind of information” (p. 13). The responses sought from the interview participants were of an emotional nature and this type of data was collectible using the photo-elicitation method of interviewing.

Photographic examples are used almost exclusively in collecting ratings for landscape preferences and they were used in this investigation. Orians and Heerwagen (1992) refer to comparative studies which compare viewing photographs versus viewing the actual scene and note that

“responses do not vary significantly as a function of presentation format. This is an important finding, because photographic techniques make it possible to test a large variety of landscapes that could not be directly experienced” (p. 557).

Photographic images have the potential to trigger responses that may have otherwise remained submerged in verbal interviewing.

“Visual reminders can shatter the composure of a guarded reply and cause the informant to blurt out submerged feelings or to reveal his emotional state by embarrassed silence” (Collier, 1957, p. 854).
The fact that the participant has not personally experienced the scene in the
photograph does not affect the emotions felt when viewing the pictures. Harper
(2002) explains this by suggesting that “images may connect an individual to
experiences or eras even if the images do not reflect the research subjects’ actual
lives” (p. 13). The subject of the photographs can also have a more profound effect
on the research participant than a purely verbal question session. According to
Harper (1988):

“as the informant studies images of his or her world and then talks about what
elements mean, the interview produces information that is more deeply
grounded in the phenomenology of the subject. A photograph, a literal
rendering of an element of the subject’s world, calls forth associations,
definitions, or ideas that otherwise go unnoticed” (p. 65).

Harper (2000) believes that in all examples of research using photo-elicitation, “the
power of the photo lies in its ability to unlock the subjectivity of those who see the
image differently from the researcher” (p. 729). The exploration of participants’
emotions and perceptions require a vehicle which allowed me to gain insights into
what certain pictures portrayed to participants and also allowed me to categorize the
data received. A photo-elicited emotional response inventory was designed by me for
this purpose and will be discussed in further detail in the Photo-Elicited Emotional
Response Inventory section which follows this introduction into emotions.

**Emotions**

Several factors were extracted from both the personal interviews and the booklet
completion, including perceptions, memories and emotions. Emotions are important
and Broderick (2006) notes that emotions always refer to the self. “They are an
integral part of the way we interpret and make sense of day-to-day events” (p. 78).
Strongman (1978) defined emotion as a personal, subjective feeling “that can have
various degrees of intensity – pleasant/unpleasant, mild/intense, transient/long
lasting, interfering with or enhancing behaviour” (Strongman, 1978, cited in
three fundamental parts: a subjective component of feeling; a physiological
component of arousal; and a motor component of expressive gesture.
In the realms of this research project, emotions are regarded in the typology of Barbalet (1998) and therefore the emotions experienced by the participants are “considered to have elements of reason and action as well as just feeling” (Broderick, 2006, p. 66). Ulrich (1983) notes that although preference towards something is important, there are equally important emotions within the range of feelings that are responsible for stress and restoration.

Opinions vary as to the exact number of emotions available to humans, affirms Broderick (2006). Plutchik (1980) for example, believes that there are eight basic emotions as polar opposites (joy/sorrow, acceptance/disgust, anger/fear and anticipation/surprise) and The National Institute of Mental Health (2005) nominates six basic emotions – three positive (joy, love, surprise) and three negative (anger, fear, sadness). Broderick (2006) states that these groupings of emotions “have subsequently been amended, added to and revised with a variety of other polar opposites by a variety of writers”. He also asserts that emotions can be considered positive (exciting or pleasant) or negative (disturbing and unpleasant) depending on the individual’s personal interpretation of that emotion and tested: “through their relations with others…Emotions are culturally shaped….learned aspects of behaviour and are situation specific. In many instances they represent conscious judgements aimed at bringing about specific outcomes” (p. 70).

In this research project I have developed an emotions inventory to be used in conjunction with photographs to elicit the participant’s emotions and responses to garden images. Because there are so many emotions available to humans, trying to describe them to a researcher in a research context may be bewildering for the participant. For this reason, the emotions inventory is limited to thirteen primary emotions and 137 secondary emotions (see Figure 10).

**The photo-elicited emotional response inventory**

As part of the interview process, each participant was thus asked to view eight pictures, designated A to H, on a computer screen. This gave good natural colour and viewing size for the participants. Smith and Woodward (1999) note that technique is
seldom an issue in photo-elicitation but “what often brings forth a wealth of information from the subjects are images” (p. 31).

The eight pictures, chosen by me from my own photographic library, represented a range of gardens; from structured to unstructured, large formal gardens (see Figure 8 - Picture F) to small courtyard areas (see Figure 15). Some featured colour over greenery; practicality over pleasure, a dominance of planting over hard landscape features and the reverse – a majority of hard landscaping features such as paving or garden edging (see Figure 8 - Picture G). Each was chosen for its individual merits and each allowed the researcher an insight into the thinking and preference, and therefore the subconscious soul attachment to plants, nature and the green world. Schwartz (1989) describes the photograph as becoming “a receptacle from which individual viewers withdraw meaning” (p. 120).

Figure 8. Pictures F and G from the interview booklet illustrating the contrasting features of two gardens. Picture F (left) shows mature trees, large water feature and a variety of shape, foliage types and colour within an informal but well maintained design while Picture G (right) has significantly more hard landscaping, less visual variety and a more formalised, repetitive design.

Beginning with picture A (see Appendix 3.2), participants were instructed to look at the picture for as long as they felt they needed to gauge a response and then to determine whether the picture made them feel positive (+ve) or negative (-ve). Although listed A to H, the content of the pictures were not in any order, that is the pictures with open, natural spaces were intermingled with those showing hard landscaping. No pre-determined subsets were organised.
On choosing either a positive or negative response to the picture (or in some cases both) they were asked to turn the split page corresponding with their response (see figure 9). Using photo elicitation the respondents were expressive in their answers and were able to document their experiences with the added visual prompt of the photograph. Similar to Schwartz’s (1989) intentions, the photographs themselves did not inform, however the participant’s analysis of the photographs did.

Once participants had turned the initial page, they were confronted with a listing of primary emotions grouped under the two banners of positive and negative. Positive emotions listed were: aroused, comfortable, impressed, inspired, peaceful, satisfied and uplifted. Negative emotions listed were: annoyed, confused, dissatisfied, indifferent, saddened and uncomfortable. Because the responses were required within a time-frame of a few seconds, they can be judged as innate responses rather than a “cognitively determined conclusion” (Lewis, 1995, p.32). After participants had determined which primary emotions corresponded with how the picture made them
feel, they then turned the page to find a further listing of secondary emotions (see Figure 10) clustered under the primary emotion titles (Williams & Harvey, 2001).

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<thead>
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<th>Primary Emotions</th>
<th>Alternative Expressions</th>
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<td><strong>Annoyed</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Confused</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>uncertain</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dissatisfied</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>emptiness</td>
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<td></td>
<td>unfeeling</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Indifferent</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>uncreative</td>
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<tr>
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<td>unhappy</td>
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<td>claustraphobic</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Primary Emotions</th>
<th>Alternative Expressions</th>
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<td><strong>Aroused</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comfortable</strong></td>
<td>carefree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nostalgic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impressed</strong></td>
<td>amazed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>thrilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspired</strong></td>
<td>adored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>impressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peaceful</strong></td>
<td>calm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>harmonious</td>
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<td></td>
<td>relaxed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>spiritual</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfied</strong></td>
<td>contented</td>
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<td></td>
<td>well designed</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Uplifted</strong></td>
<td>appreciative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>joyful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10. Page 4 of the photo-elicited emotional response inventory within the booklet showing secondary emotions within primary emotion clusters.
Participants were asked to circle those secondary emotions which corresponded best to their picture response. They were instructed to circle as many or as few as they felt best described their response to viewing that picture. Once completed, the participant was instructed to repeat this process with the next picture and its corresponding set of data sheets until they had completed an emotional response inventory data sheet for each of the eight pictures.

Each of the primary, and subsequently the secondary, emotions were designed to categorise responses into either a practical or philosophical orientation to the pictures. The participants were not made aware of this and there was no notation on the documentation that they were using to complete the task. The division of the practical/philosophical descriptors was known only to the researcher and the number of each descriptor was equally divided.

During the emotion elicitation from the photographs, it was common for the participants to ‘talk through’ their decisions, although they did not appear to warrant a reply from myself. This ‘talking through’ was a sharing of opinions. Seldom was the photo elicitation part of the booklet undertaken in silence. This allowed the participants to both physically score their opinion and to verbally confirm their decision to choose the nominated descriptor. The verbal addition seemed to make them feel more comfortable than completing the task in silence. The impression I received from this during the interview session was that it also included me in the process rather than focussing primarily on their responses, and directly on them as respondents.

Using photo-elicitation within the research setting can alter the traditional roles of the researcher and the participant, allowing the participant to become more empowered (Stewart, Liebert and Larkin, 2004) and more deeply involved in the research process. “Eliciting responses through images brings the ‘subject’ into the research process as an interpreter or even an active collaborator rather than as a passive object of study” (Stanczak, 2004, p. 1473). Making the photograph the principal focus of the interview (Loeffler, 2004) may also alleviate any stress experienced by the participant from being the research subject (Collier and Collier,
It also allowed the participant to focus on something other than the researcher (Schwartz, 1989).

Harper (2002) suggests that using photographs allows for the bridging of culturally different worlds. This method is therefore appropriate in my research methodology where I have interviewed participants from both English and Anglo-Celtic Australian cultures and backgrounds. As noted before, using photographs also allowed both cultures to experience the same photographs for comparable and contrastable results, something which may have otherwise been unachievable because of the enormous distances between participants.

**Analysing the photo-elicitation responses**

The responses nominated by the participants were collated onto a spreadsheet under their primary then secondary descriptors. The spreadsheet was then marked if a response was indicated and these were analysed under the headings of Australian Professional, Australian Lay, Total of Australian Responses, English Professional, English Lay, Total of English Responses, Total of Australian and English Responses. It was the quality and nature of the emotions which I was trying to capture using this methodology and therefore the number of participants selecting that emotion was useful for comparative purposes and not for statistical analysis.

**Image preference ratings**

Once participants had finished assessing and nominating their emotions for the eight individual pictures, they were asked to rank their preference of all eight pictures. “Although preference or aesthetic liking is an important emotional response, it is only one component of the broad range of feelings (e.g., fear, anger, sadness, interest) that are central to the psychological dimension of stress and restoration” (Ulrich, 1983).

One page within the booklet featured thumbnails of all eight pictures in the order they appeared during the photo-elicited emotional response inventory (see Appendix 3.2). Adjacent boxes allowed participants to nominate their order of liking, with their
most favourite earning the ranking of number one and their least favourite picture ranking at number eight. This question was inserted to determine how people view popular landscape features and the level of importance they attach to them as noted by the ranking given to them and to see whether preference differed with country of origin and with either a learned or innate response basis.

**Analysing the image preference ratings data**

The image preference data was collected and an average of each picture was calculated to determine the preference listings. The results were calculated initially to give results for Australian Professional, Australian Lay, Total Australian Preferences, English Professional, English Lay, Total English Preferences and for the Total Australian and English Preferences. Ranking the pictures in an order with the most preferred having the lowest figure and the least preferred having the highest figure were then tabulated. These tabulations were undertaken for each of the groups nominated above and then the results of the Total Australian and Total English were used for comparison within the results section, as shown in Chapter 7.

**Scale rating statements**

Participants were then asked to read a series of eight descriptive statements, each with a nine-point scale (adapted from a Likert scale) beneath it (see Appendix 3.3). They were asked to specify their response to the statement by indicating their level of agreement (Williams and Harvey, 2001) by marking a position on the scale. This described their personal experience to the belief behind the descriptive statement. Position 1 indicated a strong disagreement to the relevant statement and position 9 indicated that they strongly agreed with the relevant statement, such as shown in Figure 11 below.

3. I go into the garden to recharge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11. Example of the Scale Rating Statement as given to participants.
Rating scales are useful in determining preference in environmental perception and preference research. They were designed to elicit the emotional responses of the participants in relation to their opinions of how they perceived the garden and their role within it. The average response of the two different cultural groups would be plotted onto the rating scale at the relevant point to show similarity or differences of ratings.

Rating scales are easily completed and are acceptable to a wide range of participants; those from different age groups, educational backgrounds and cultures. Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) discuss their use of rating scales and their preferences for using a scale with an odd number of scale positions to allow participants to choose a completely neutral midpoint as against a scale with an even number of positions that forces participants to choose a direction. They note that a disadvantage of this type of data collection is that it can seem as if the researcher is “putting words in the mouths of the participants” which removes the control, and therefore the satisfaction derived from generating control, from the participants. Conversely, one advantage is that “comparability across respondents is enhanced if everyone is addressing the same questions” (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989). I decided to use a scale with an odd number of scale positions (9) to provide a neutral midpoint for the participants.

In his paper ‘Environmental Perception Rating Scales: A Case for Simple Methods of Analysis’, Schroeder (1984) also deems a simple means rating as effective as other more sophisticated rating methods. “Mean ratings may be preferred to the extent that they simplify the analysis and presentation of results and do not require special software and computing procedures” (p. 586).

**Analysing the scale rating statements**

The scale rating statements were utilised to complement the qualitative data and to cross check the participant’s perceptions to a variety of garden and gardening questions. Some had been asked previously within the interviews and some had been asked within other parts of the booklet.
Each of the questions answered was averaged against all the other participants for that question and the results tabulated, like other results, into the groups of Australian Professional, Australian Lay, Total Australian, English Professional, English Lay, Total English and for the Total Australian and English. In the final results tabulation, the data from the Total Australian and Total English are given as a good representation of the participants responses.

**The emotions sphere**

Participants were next invited to study the ‘Emotions Sphere’ and were asked to show their responses to “What gardens mean to you” by nominating terms from the list within the ‘Emotions Sphere’. Within this ‘sphere’ were twenty four terms arranged in alphabetical order, so there were no intentional clusters of terms (see Appendix 3.4). Participants were asked to circle those terms which best described what gardens meant to them. They were also invited to add additional terms at the bottom of the page if an emotion they felt was important was not included in the terminology listing.

The terms listed within the emotions sphere were:

- Complementary
- Controlled
- Creative Space
- Cultivation
- Divine Presence
- Naturalistic
- Nurturing
- Organised
- Peaceful
- Physical
- Practical
- Productive
- Purposeful
- Refreshing
- Relaxing
- Renewing
- Romantic
- Satisfying
- Spiritual
- Status Symbol
- Structured
- Survival
- Unpretentious
- Wilderness

The emotions sphere was a descriptor apparatus designed by me, containing terms chosen for their emotional content after analysis of literature based upon gardens and gardening. The twenty four terms divided evenly into two categories, unknown to all except the researcher. The terms were carefully selected after the literature analysis to belong to two major categories – spiritual and physical – and the choices indicated by participants would allow the researcher to divine their intuitive feel for their ‘garden within’. A similar question to this had been asked during the interview
session, and re-asking it in another format was used to clarify previous responses. In all cases, the rewording or re-asking of the question in a different format helped to explain and clarify the interview responses and vice versa; the interview responses helped clarify the results of the booklet segments.

**The arousal matrices**

The final two parts of the booklet were a pair of arousal matrices; The Garden as a Place for Activity and The Garden as an Entity. These matrices gave participants an opportunity to summarise their approach to gardens as places for activity and as an entity. The diagram was an adaptation of Apter’s (1992) matrix showing the relationship between levels of arousal and pleasant or unpleasant feelings.

“The diagram illustrates how from point ‘x’ in the centre, high arousal can be both pleasant and unpleasant depending upon one’s state of mind. As arousal increases, increasing excitement causes increased pleasant feelings. Conversely, from the same mid-point ‘x’, as arousal increases, increasing anxiety causes increased unpleasant feelings. The diagram also looks at the lower end of the arousal range, where again low arousal can be both pleasant and unpleasant depending upon one’s state of mind. Moving left from point ‘x’, as arousal decreases, increasing boredom (decreasing excitement) causes increased unpleasant feelings. Conversely, from the same mid-point, as arousal decreases, increasing relaxation (decreasing anxiety) induces increased pleasant feelings” (Broderick, 2006, pp.84-85).

![Apter’s Arousal Matrix showing the relationship between levels of arousal and pleasant or unpleasant feelings](Apter, 1992, p.19).

Figure 12. Apter’s Arousal Matrix showing the relationship between levels of arousal and pleasant or unpleasant feelings (Apter, 1992, p.19).
This matrix was adapted to allow the participants to situate their opinions in an emotional matrix. Garden and gardening descriptors replaced the boredom/anxiety/excitement/relaxation descriptors to capture the levels of emotions from the participants. They were instructed to study each matrix and decide where they felt they “fitted” on the scale before placing a circle on that spot. They were also requested to indicate their breadth of emotion about their answer by using a large circle to designate its importance to the participant and a small circle to indicate a lesser emotion/lesser importance.

![Graph showing emotional matrix](image)

**Figure 13. The adaptation of Apter’s (1992) diagram to indicate levels of arousal and pleasant or unpleasant feelings.**

Some people express themselves more fully and succinctly through visual rather than literal means. Completing the matrix diagrams on The Garden as a Place for Activity and The Garden as an Entity allowed participants to ‘site’ rather than ‘state’ their personal position, depth of emotion and importance regarding their position of activity or place. All of the matrix diagrams for The Garden as a Place for Activity were collected into a group. The Garden as an Entity matrices were collected into a
second group. Each group was then collated and their positioning marks “overlaid”
to form a single scatter-plot diagram.

On average, the completions time for the booklet containing the photo-elicited
emotional response inventory, image preference rating, scale rating statement,
emotions sphere and arousal matrices was around 30 minutes. Once completed, this
finalised the data collected from participants.
Research administration: ethical considerations

Because of the human interaction to be undertaken within the interview mode of this research project through interviewing and gaining information, opinions and emotional responses from individuals, ethics approval was deemed necessary and therefore sought and approved. The application was completed as per the university’s instructions and submitted for inclusion to the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee and was subsequently granted. Questions regarding the type of research and how it impacted on the research subjects were covered, as were the issues of confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

The plain language statement

The Plain Language Statement (Appendix 2.2) is an information statement required by the USW Human Ethics Committee which gives the potential participant a fuller explanation about the project, including information such as:

- the identity of the researcher’s host institution, in this case The University of Western Sydney;
- the researcher who is conducting the research project;
- a written summary of the procedures expected to feature within the research project;
- the purpose of the investigation in terms the potential participant can understand;
- any possible hazards or discomforts that could occur;
- an estimate of the expected amount of time their input may take;
- confirmation that they may withdraw their consent and their participation from the project at any time without any “disadvantages/penalties/adverse consequences” (UWS Human Ethics Protocol Approval Application Guidelines 2006);
- an offer of further clarification of the project through contact with the principal researcher;
and finally, the important issues of confidentiality, anonymity, de-
identification, transcribing and storage of all collected recordings, written
data and booklets.

The consent form
After reading the Plain Language Statement, the potential participant chose whether
or not to participate in the research project and the consent form was completed
indicating their decision regarding participation. The consent form (see Appendix 2.3)
required the participant to choose from the upper section which indicated approval
for participation or the lower section which declined participation in the project. The
potential participant entered their full name on the appropriate line, before signing
and dating it. The consent form was then returned to the researcher, either by hand at
the interview or in an enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope. A copy of the Plain
Language Statement was offered to all participants for their personal records.

Privacy and confidentiality
As part of the introductory process with the proposed participants, they were advised
of the privacy and confidentiality issues. All extracted information from the
participants would be coded in a manner identifiable to the researcher only. This
code would indicate to the researcher their country of origin (Aus or UK) and
whether they were in the professional (P) or lay (L) grouping, along with an
individual identifying number. This identifying number was known only to the
researcher and was solely for the researcher’s benefit for purposes of clarification of
impressions should the researcher need to contact the participant again. This means
of identification respected the confidentiality of participants and any controls on
access to data. The participants were assured that the identifying codes were
confidential and would not be made known or released to any other person.

Storage and security of data
Participants were also apprised of the method of storage and security of their given
data. Within this research project, participants have given interviews, completed
booklets, and filled out arousal matrices. Audio tapes, transcripts, interview notes,
floppy disks and other materials have been used solely by the principal researcher and have not been viewed by any other person. Data entered into a computer has been securely kept on a floppy disk, CD-ROM, external removable drive and a backup disk. Both data and disks have been secured by the researcher within a locked filing cabinet in a locked office on the university campus, only accessible to the researcher. The interviews have been transcribed and the transcriptions and tapes have also been stored in the locked filing cabinet, along with all of the written data, such as the photo-elicited emotional response inventory, image preference ratings, scale rating statements, emotions sphere and arousal matrices. All identifying information from collected research materials has been removed and replaced by codes. Code details have been stored separately in a secure location known only to the researcher.

All records kept within the locked filing cabinet on the university grounds have been sealed in a clearly labelled file to prevent accidental opening of the files. Participants have been informed and reassured of this security measure. All stored data will be destroyed at least five years after the publication of this thesis, in accordance with the Ethics Committee of the University of Western Sydney. As per the guidelines, all participant-completed printed documents will be shredded and all interview tapes shall be erased.

All of these protocols were discussed and deemed acceptable by both the participant and myself before any meeting times were arranged. Holding these discussions prior to the interview helped to establish the structure, format and tone of the forthcoming interview, producing a “productive interpersonal climate” (Minichiello, 1995, p. 78) by establishing rapport. Establishing this early contact and therefore the beginning of a ‘research relationship’ instituted a more communicative atmosphere and possibly resulted in more freely given responses during the actual interview session.
Conclusion

The collection, collation and analysis of the varying types of information was undertaken to further the knowledge about gardens, gardening and the ‘green world’ across two ‘similar’ yet quite distinct cultures.

Williams and Harvey (2001) suggest the use of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies allows for a more fully rounded picture of the research outcomes. The principal form of data collection was qualitative using photographs, verbal interviews and techniques for thematic and emotional elicitation to collect data for analysis and examination. This information was analysed using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The discovery and identification of themes in attitudinal and emotional responses, and any underlying connections emerging from the research was best achieved by using an interpretive methodology within a qualitative study. Within the interview process, the four groups were individually interviewed before being introduced to the eight pictures chosen by myself to extract their intuitive responses to the images displayed on a laptop computer screen. These responses gave me insights into their thoughts, perceptions and opinions about gardens and gardening, and what was important to them in their associations with gardens and gardening. Results were analysed using interpretive manual cross-sectional indexing (Mason, 1996, p.111), a form of analysis that incorporates coded thematic data (i.e. information gained from interviews) with categorised data in the form of the emotions inventory, image preference ratings, scale rating statements, emotions sphere and arousal matrices.

Other factors for consideration included the discovery of repetition, recurring events, experiences or topics, noting themes and patterns and looking for underlying similarities between experiences, noting differences and similarities, and identifying any connections. Some of the categorisable data was also analysed quantitatively to produce graphs and scatter-plot diagrams in an attempt to summarise responses and illustrate trends.
The results of these investigations will be presented in three results chapters. Chapter 6 explicates the results of the literature analysis conducted between the Australian and British National Libraries. Chapter 7 illustrates the results, opinions and perceptions of the participants into the concepts of what a garden is, and Chapter 8 explains and explores the results and discussion into gardening and the perceptions associated with gardening for both the Australian and English participants.
Chapter 6

Majestic oaks to scribbly gums: garden & gardening publications in England and Australia.

The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the eyes of others only a green thing that stands in the way. Some see nature all ridicule and deformity ... and some scarce see nature at all. But to the eyes of the man of imagination, nature is imagination itself.

William Blake The Letters (1799)

This chapter explores the results of the document analysis undertaken in 2004 which investigates the type of literature being produced by Australia and England over a ten year period from 1993 to 2003. Determining the types of literature being published in a country may help illuminate a nation’s orientation to gardening.
The literature of gardens and gardening

As an initial exploration of my research into ‘the garden within’ I ventured into the world of garden book publishing to determine the styles and popularity of gardening genres being produced. I chose the book publishing industry specifically as this could be ratified with data from the national libraries of both countries.

After studying the Dewey Decimal (DD) categories it was decided to focus the document analysis investigation to the DD numbers 635.9 and 635.09 as these covered wide areas of horticulture, both in practical and philosophical terms, and would therefore provide the richest and most accurate information for the research.

To gauge the proportion of philosophical and practical oriented books being published within Australia and England, the gardening literature produced in that ten year period was analysed and documented in formats to demonstrate the differences between countries of publication.

Results of the document analysis for English and Australian publications

After searching the catalogues of both the Australian National Library (ANL) and the British Library (BL), publications were categorised and divided into several classifications. The classifications were devised after analysing the types of publications being issued within these DD numbers and which would describe the publications most definitively. These included the subheadings of: catalogues; club/society (these were the published club or society magazines); conference proceedings; ‘how to’ which described the processes of gardening; philosophical (which dealt with the musings, garden correspondences and spiritual discussions surrounding gardens and gardening); and trade/professional publications (which were aimed at professional industries such as turf, irrigation and hydroponics, for example).
The figures discussed below were extracted from the tables produced from the literature analysis of English and Australian published titles listed in the determined DD categories (see Appendix 4). These show the number of publications listed as published in their home country by the National Library of that country.

The national library of each country collects and maintains a national collection of published materials from within that country. As such, the National Library of Australia requires Australian publishers to deposit of copy of library materials published within Australia to the NLA within one month after publication, as outlined by the Copyright Act of 1968, Section 201. Similarly, the British Copyright and Related Act 2000 specifies that publishers and distributors within Britain are legally obliged to deposit library materials to the British Library within one month of publication. The definition of a library material, as per the Copyright Act, 1968, includes books, periodicals, pamphlets and newspapers.

The results show that England catalogued almost twice the amount of published titles within those DD numbers during the ten year period when compared to the catalogued Australian publication figures. Population figures for that period, however, show England’s population to be almost 2.5 times the size of that within Australia.

According to this data, publication preferences for gardening and horticultural titles lies within the practical oriented publications which outline instructions on care and give direction to gardeners, providing ideas within a framework of semi-structured ‘free choice’.

The table below outlines the publication figures as sourced from the NLA and BNL during February, 2004.
Table 5. Comparison of publications catalogued from 1993 to 2003 in Australia and England with Dewey Decimal numbers 635.9 and 635.09+.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Publications Catalogued</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>England</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catalogues</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club/Society</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Proceedings</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>1345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade/Professional</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical – which included:</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>garden 'biographies', garden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>travelogs, correspondences, garden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>musings and garden spirituality within the DD number</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of publications</td>
<td>776</td>
<td>1549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of practical titles within the total number of publications</td>
<td>97.5%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of philosophical titles within the total number of publications</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures relating to the literature analysis illustrate that there was indeed a predominance of catalogued published materials towards the practical issues and although the overall number of Australian publications was smaller, the percentage of practical oriented publications within their publication figures show a marginally higher percentage of published practical titles over philosophical titles.

Results of practical publications

The publications classed as those of a practical orientation (the catalogues, club/society publications, conference proceedings, ‘how to’ publications and the trade and professional publications) published within Australia within 1993-2003 showed a marginally larger proportion than the English ‘how to’ publications. There was a difference, however, in the proportions of publications when these were broken down into individual categories.

There were five times as many trade and professional magazines catalogued in Australia (236) when compared to the catalogued English trade and professional...
publications (47), and almost twice as many catalogued club and society printings in Australia (82) than in England (44).

Overall, during the ten year period, there were 411 practical oriented titles catalogued in Australia within the specific DD categories. This is approximately 70% less than England’s figure of 1345 titles within the same ten year period. This could be considered strong evidence in support of England’s strong attraction and engagement with nature, gardens and gardening.

Results of philosophical publications

I have classed the philosophical publications as those which feature authors’ thoughts on the garden as a place. They may take the form of a travelogue of gardens, gardeners and garden correspondences, relate to garden musings or be a form of garden ‘biography’. They are not of a practical nature, yet may relate the life dramas and humorous situations in gardens, gardening and garden creation.

The results of this research found that within the nominated DD call numbers English publishers produced 108 of these philosophical titles compared to the 19 published Australian titles. The five-fold difference of the publication figures may indicate an awareness within Australia of this type of publication but at a much reduced level of enthusiasm of the publishers (and therefore the public). It may also indicate that publishers consider the world-wide market as satisfying the Australian market’s desire for publications within this gardening genre.

From assessing the number of publications categorized by their genre it appeared that the majority of publications were of a practical nature in both the English and Australian lists. The results from both countries showed the ‘how to’ gardening publications as the most popular, followed by the trade/professional group in Australia, then the philosophical grouping from England. These rankings are outlined in table 6 below:
Table 6. Types of publications catalogued in Australia and England during 1993-2003 in order of popularity of publication numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(411) How to</td>
<td>How to (1345)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade/Professional</td>
<td>Philosophical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club/Society</td>
<td>Trade/Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Proceedings</td>
<td>Club/Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophical</td>
<td>Catalogues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) Catalogues</td>
<td>Conference Proceedings (0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore those that were clustered within the realms of the ‘practical’ horticultural publications (those of catalogues, club/society, conference proceedings, ‘how to’ and the trade/professional industry) showed a high prevalence within both countries, with Australia publishing more, percentage-wise, than England, with 97.5% of their catalogued horticultural publications relating to a practical issue. England, on the other hand, had 93% of their catalogued horticultural publications relating to a practical issue. The results also showed that 108 British horticultural publications within those DD categories were within the parameters for the philosophical category. Compared with the 19 of the Australian industry, these results show that the amount of British philosophical works published is almost five times greater than those disseminated by the Australian publishing industry, however this again may be due to the larger English gardening market satisfying world-wide demand.

The following two chapters will contribute to the rationalization behind the reasons why the publication results are greater in the total number of catalogued English published titles than in the total number of catalogued Australian published titles.
Conclusion

Studies have shown that gardeners are influenced by the gardening media (Bhatti & Church, 2001). If the publishing profile results outlined within this chapter can be translated into the real and inhabited world, then it could be suggested that the profile of a gardener may be influenced by the publishing habits of their country of origin and nationality. Accordingly, Australian participants might show a predilection towards more practical aspects of gardens and gardening whereas the English participants may exhibit a more spiritual and philosophical view of gardens, gardening and the green world in general. This hypothesis is consistent with the initial discoveries from informal discussions with professional horticultural colleagues and amateur gardening associates from both England and Australia. This consistency within the hypothesis is reinforced within the following chapters: Chapter 7, *The Eden Concept: the Garden Within*, which describes how the Australian and English participants viewed gardens, and Chapter 8 *The Glory of Gardening and Gardeners* which relates the impressions and perceptions of the participants to gardening as an activity.
Chapter 7

The Eden Concept: our garden within

“We may have to learn again the mystery of the garden: how its external characteristics model the heart itself, and how the soul is a garden enclosed, our own perpetual paradise where we can be refreshed and restored.”


What is a garden?

According to the Macquarie Dictionary, the term ‘garden’ is defined as

“1. a plot of ground devoted to the cultivation of useful or ornamental plants. 2. a piece of ground, or other space, commonly with ornamental plants, trees, etc., used as a place of recreation…3. a fertile and delightful spot or region, 4. relating to or produced in a garden… 5. (of recent urban developments) deliberately planned so as to have many garden-like open spaces: a garden city. 6. to lay out or cultivate a garden…” (Macquarie, 2005, p. 584).

The Oxford English Dictionary gives a slightly different interpretation:

“1. a piece of ground adjoining a house, typically cultivated to provide a lawn and flowerbeds. 2. (gardens) ornamental grounds laid out for public enjoyment” (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989).
These definitions from two different countries are the first of the subtle differences which are delivered within this results chapter. Each of the definitions delivers the general meaning of the terms garden, however there are subtle differences in description. The Australian produced Macquarie dictionary (2005) describes the garden using six sub-descriptions. Of those six, five use practical terms within the descriptions to explain the concept of gardens, such as *cultivation*, *recreation*, *produced*, *planned* and *cultivate*.

There was also the suggestion that the garden was an area for activity, with the inclusion of the term of *recreation*. The Oxford English Dictionary, however, chooses to describe the concept of ‘garden’ using a majority of aesthetic terms, such as *lawn and flowerbeds* and *ornamental grounds* whilst including one practical term *cultivated* within the two sub-descriptions. The term enjoyment could also represent activity, but *enjoyment* alludes to a predominantly passive form of usage, rather than the more action-imbued term of *recreation*. Although it could be suggested that these subtle yet important variations within two countries meanings are the result of a difference in educational levels by the person creating the dictionary entry, the sentiments and understanding of these garden terms are mirrored by the participants’ responses within this research project.

After analysis of the data, the answers given by participants revealed subcategories of garden ‘components’. It is these garden components that provide the information allowing us to determine what a garden is for both the Australian and English participants.

The following results are gathered from the groups of professional and lay participants within the English and Australian groups. Where the professional and lay results within the nationality grouping displays no discernible difference to the total of that country, the results will reflect the total of that grouping unless otherwise stated, for example English participants without further specification will relate to all the English participants, both lay and professional.
A garden is…

‘Women see gardens and gardening as a thing of beauty. Men see them as chores’ stated one female participant. This throwaway statement succinctly encapsulates two of the very issues I am investigating within this thesis: do we view the garden and all its accompanying associations as something we cherish or something of a chore?

As confirmed by the collected data and dictionary definitions, two of the main reasons people venture into a garden are (1) to enjoy and experience it and (2) to perform a task. Throughout this research project, from the initial informal discussions through to the literature analysis, these two themes reappeared consistently. It was decided to use this consistent recurrence within the research questions and to investigate whether the anecdotal evidence corroborated the collected research data. After analysis of the initial data collected, descriptors were devised to encapsulate the root of these two themes and these are:

- **spiritual** (a non-physical/non-practical relationship with the garden or nature)
  - and
- **physical** (a physical and/or practical participation with the garden or nature).

Using these concepts helped to illustrate how the participants viewed their place within the garden or within the practice of gardening. They were able to ground themselves within either a predominantly ‘practical’ or ‘spiritual/philosophical’ association.

Initial exploration of the cross-cultural meanings of gardens and gardening revealed a predilection by non-participant Australian horticultural colleagues towards practical aspects within the concepts of gardens and gardening. Analysis and exploration of the research data has also shown this tendency by Australian participants to practical and physical aspects of the garden and gardening.

English participants have shown a deeper connection and deeper comfort level in discussing nature and the garden. In general, their terminology was richer and more descriptive, and their approach to nature and the garden was, in essence, more spiritual.
These two concepts are the major concepts being explored within this study. From the research collected there were subsections which included these concepts of practical and spiritual.

It was necessary to determine which group was ‘speaking’ in some instances, and in that regard I have coded the participant groups as AL (Australian lay participant), AP (Australian professional participant), EL (English lay participant) and EP (English professional participant). All further data is de-identified as per the University’s Ethics Guidelines.

I have placed the subsection of *a place of perfection* first to show examples of the depth of engagement by participants with gardens and to introduce the predilections being explored in this thesis. The following subsection, *a place of activity*, further explores the primary tendencies by participants to emerge from this research. The subsequent subsections compound my findings by consistently demonstrating recurring examples of these preferences.
...a place of perfection

Gardens can be made in many situations and can mean many different things to different people. The reason there are so many ways and views on gardening is due to the gardener having the ability and the chance to choose. Choice, states Kaplan (1973), is important to gardeners as it gives them a sense of control and allows them to influence their behaviour in the garden process by continually evaluating results and making changes where necessary, confirming that sense of control they have over their natural environment.

Participants reported they enjoyed changing their environment, from minor changes:

“Tidying, keeping it ‘right’, deadheading, weeding” (AL)

to major alterations and additions:

“I build structures... Lots of manual work, which is rewarding” (AL)

This AL described how since her husband had died she had found a new interest in the garden and that she had the skills and desires to create quite elaborate ‘structures’ within her garden. Some of the new skills she learnt during these building projects were concreting, simple carpentry, paving, stone wall building, and installing a 12 volt wiring system for garden lighting. All of these projects were used to change the design of her garden which she had lived with for many years but now had the physical means and capacity to change it.

Gardens, as places of perfection, have been exalted in poetry, such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s Kubla Khan, by painters like Michelangelo Buonarroti and even woven into designs for paradise carpets for the royal Sassanian King Khusrau (Thacker, 1997). A place of perfection is often referred to as paradise, the final retreat at the end of our days, and this concept has been portrayed throughout the world globally and historically in the form of a garden (Adams, 1991; Musgrave, 2000). Garden designers have attempted to create earthly forms of paradise in the form of a garden and anecdotal evidence claims that a major motivation behind domestic garden creation is the opportunity to ‘own’ our
own, personal piece of paradise. In an attempt to further understand this concept of a
paradise garden and what it entails, Australian and English participants were invited to
mentally ‘create’ their own paradise garden.

Describing the garden as a place of perfection, or as an ideal, allows for implementation
of a wide range of possible styles and inclusions. However additions and inclusions
within an actual garden may be impeded by realities such as finance, topography, land
size and climate – a difficult factor for gardeners – and these impediments would limit
their given responses. This was overcome by instructing participants to mentally remove
any limitations or obstacles. To explore any commonality or differences within the
perceptions of the participant groups, I asked each participant to describe their vision of
a perfect garden.

This was an enjoyable exercise as you could see the participants trying to mentally
prioritize what they wanted to say first. Some participants took a moment to respond and
then the imagery started to emerge. In some cases all the descriptions just tumbled out
with a rush and without any order to it.

“Bluebells under deciduous trees. Violets, daisies, lots of foliage for different
seasons. Crabapple, roses, lots of climbing vines, clematis, a vege patch and a
walnut tree, as we had one in my first garden when I got married. We had a
walnut tree with a swing in it in my parent’s garden. We used to collect the nuts.
I’ve always hoped one of my boys would have one in their garden…”

“I love a lot of these plants for different reasons and I appreciate them in
different ways, so this is a very, very difficult question for me. I would love a
Magnolia grandiflora, I would have a Bunya pine in the garden, I would have a
hoop pine, an Auricaria cunninghamia, I… what else would I have? I would love
an Agathus, and then in another corner I would have a Brachychiton discolour
and I would probably like to have an oak tree somewhere – this is great!”

The plants and plantings of the ‘ideal’ garden

Shrubs and flowering plants were a common inclusion in the responses of the Australian
and English groups. Specific plants were mentioned by the Australians: “Bluebells”,
“roses”, “azaleas”, “daphne”, “tulips, daffodils and jonquils”, “camellias”, “violets”,

180
“daisies”, “crab-apple”, “magnolia”, “clematis”, “Japanese maples”, “lavenders”, “iris” and “a walnut tree”.

All of these plants listed by the Australian participants are classed as exotic plants within Australia, and are all recognised ‘English-garden’ specimens. Interestingly, no Australian native shrubs and flowers were mentioned by name, although one participant suggested she’d like “natives” and another noted her wish for an “Australian-type garden”. Several Australian native trees, however, were named as inclusions by one Australian participant, who said she:

“would have a grove of casuarina’s, some waratahs, a Bunya pine...a hoop pine ...and a Brachychiton discolour”

in combination with her other ideal specimens of “Japanese maples”, “an oak tree”, “a Magnolia grandiflora”, and “a few agaves”.

It could be argued that the Australian participants responded with the native suggestions because of nationalistic pride and it may have been a conscious (or subconscious) effort at ensuring that the Australian nation was ‘represented’ by its native species. The AP who chose and named the Australian native plants was in the professional participant group and would have been more aware of the native species available, and this, it could be argued, has influenced her choice.

Other elements deemed as desirable by the Australian participants included areas of “parkland setting with beds”, “mass plantings”, “lots of different plants”, “trees”, “flowers” and garden designs which included “lots of foliage for different seasons” and were more “informal rather than a showpiece”. According to the data for preference, this preference for informal design appealed to the majority of the Australian participants. Other comments confirming this choice included the desire for a “lovely rambling garden” which was “not too manicured”.

In contrast, the English participants didn’t specify any particular design for the garden or any named varieties of plants. Although named plant varieties did not feature, nominated
groups of plants, such as trees, shrubs and flowers recurred consistently within the responses. Therefore, the plants featuring within an English garden, as educed from these participant responses, would include “a good selection of trees and shrubs” (“I’d have trees and shrubs”, “a gentle garden with large shrubs”, “flowers, shrubs and some lovely large trees” and “lots of large flowering shrubs”), “climbers to perfume”, a “herbaceous garden” and “plants that tend to look after themselves”.

A notable omission from the Australian ‘wish list’ was any mention of colour, whether in flowers, plants or ‘grass’ (as lawn was referred to by the Australian participants). The closest reference to colour by the Australian participants was the mention of the different foliage for different seasons. Garden ‘colour’ however, was a recurring feature in the English participant’s responses and was expressed as:

“Lots of greens”
“colour at every height, from baskets to climbers”
“I like colour but not when it’s so dazzling it’s uncomfortable”
“light and shade”
“soft features and no glaring bits”

This lack of colour ‘consciousness’ within the Australian participant responses could be due to the level of light experienced by the Australian participants within the Australian landscape. Rose (Personal communication 6 August 2007, Sydney) states that Australian light is harsher and more glaringly bright, particularly when compared to the softer light of England. The brightness can have the effect of ‘flattening’ the true colour of objects, including plants and gardens. The immediate landscape can also influence the colours and the true effect may not be felt in areas of monochromatic tones, such as within city streets spawning grey, high-rise buildings, but may be more pronounced within green zones.

Parts of the Australian landscape and Australian native plants, too, are subdued in colour, whether in grey-green leaves or reduced flower size, and this may partially explain the omission of reference to colour. Determining the result of the obvious omission to
Grass and lawn were nominated by both groups in various shapes and sizes. The English participants were more detailed in their desire for a “lovely green lawn” and described the lawns in terms of shapes (“I like curved lawns”, “some sweeping lawn”, “a green swathe”) and quantities “I’d have some grass but I’m not over-keen on grass” and “I don’t like grass and nothing else but borders”.

Although water shortages and restrictions in many Australian states makes lawn maintenance difficult, the Australian participants still showed preference to having ‘grass’ in their perfect garden, although specification of quantity varied with most specifying “lots of grass” whilst only a few opted for “not much grass”. It was notable that the English participants were more highly descriptive when referring to lawn or ‘grass’ (“sweeping lawn”, “green swathe”), making it sound more desirable than the Australian descriptions which tended to make ‘grass’ sound like a relatively functional and standard inclusion to the Australian garden.

One interesting similarity was that of the ‘ideal’ garden size as proposed by both the Australian and English participants. The concept of a large garden was consistently mentioned by the Australian participants and the “perfect size” for most was nominated as “one acre ideally”; one participant even nominated five acres as their perfect size. The majority of these participants were elderly, some mentioned increasing problems with movement and mobility, and at the time of the interview all apart from one were living on approximately quarter acre blocks (one participant was living on a ¾ acre block). From our discussions it emerged that although they had never lived on a one acre block, childhood memories of relatives with gardens, possibly on acreage, may have prompted this choice of block size.

Only two of the English participants (a married couple) lived on an acre. The homes of the remaining English participants were on similar sized, and often smaller, blocks than the Australians, yet some of the nominated responses for the perfect garden size included suggestions of:
As with the Australian participants, none had lived on a block larger than an average building block size of approximately a quarter acre (even less in the cases of some English participants) and yet they were nominating large gardens as their preference within their mentally created ‘ideal garden’. One participant had parents employed as farm labourers in rural Lincolnshire during his early years. He was unable to definitely confirm whether he had spent a lot of time around the farm and whether this could have influenced his size preference. The majority of the other participants had resided in semi-rural areas within this county.

The nomination of a large garden as ideal is consistent within the data collected on picture preference and will be discussed in further detail during this subsection.

Water was also mentioned within the criteria nominated by both groups of participants in their mental creation of an ‘ideal’ garden, although it was not as popular or as enthusiastically discussed as were the plants and planting inclusions. The Australians expressed preferences for “lots of running water” in various styles and sizes, from “water” and “water-features” to “a creek” and “several dams”.

The English participants have consistently provided more detailed descriptions within the interview section of the research and this was reiterated yet again within their rich and descriptive terminology regarding water ‘features’ in their ‘ideal’ gardens. Suggestions included “a pond – I like running water – with a rockery at the back of the pond”, “a still pond – not necessarily a water feature”, “a pond, a huge pond with a bridge over it” and “I love to hear the gentle splash of water overflowing from one of those really large urns onto a pebbly base – like you see on display in garden centres”.

The richness and detail of the English participant’s answers are a noticeable contrast to the less descriptive and almost bland responses of the Australians to some questions. Although differences in linguistic expression among participants may indicate differing
qualitative responses, there is also a possibility that linguistic expressions represent similar phenomenons variable by culture. While I recognise this as a complicating factor, the subtle differences are further triangulated by the photo-elicited Emotional Response Inventory and more in-depth interviewing.

The English response to the inclusion of water is also supported by the picture preference data which has the most preferred picture prominently featuring a large lake in the background of the photograph. The picture preference data results will be discussed in further detail during the subsection ‘The structure and hard landscaping of the ‘ideal’ garden’.

Water has been an accepted part of gardens and garden design throughout history and it was a noted inclusion in the historical versions of pairidaēz or Paradise garden. Thacker (1997) notes that the water in these gardens was often divided into four streams to depict the four life sources of the earth.

The data results are consistent with Lewis’s (1996) assertion that water is a preferred landscape inclusion. A study referred to by Rodman and Souvestre (2004) investigating the work productivity of astronauts in a simulated space station also confirms these assertions. In the discussed study each space station participant viewed one of four different pictures placed on their cabin bulkhead. The pictures were of a waterfall, an abstract image, a savanna-like scene and no picture (the control). Results showed that while the waterfall was the most visually preferred picture, skin conductance tests showed that the savanna-like scene actually reduced the stress levels more significantly than the waterfall picture, even when the participants were not aware of or actively looking at the picture. Therefore survival took precedence to the slaking of thirst and refreshment of the body.

Ulrich (1983) notes the there is considerable evidence that water “is a dominant visual landscape property that enhances scenic quality” (p. 104) and that this element has been found, within other studies, as evoking “interest, aesthetic pleasantness, and positive
feelings, such as tranquillity” (p. 104).

Water, however, was also important in mythological terms and as such, it could be argued that a preference for water is a retained mythological and evolutionary ‘thread’ which, like other nature ‘links’, have remained unbroken.

Ulrich (1983) considers that “water and vegetation can be considered preferenda that are highly effective in eliciting affective reactions” (p. 111).

The focus on vegetation and planting (“abundant flora”, “lots of different plants”) as the most preferred elements of an adult’s ‘ideal garden’ is consistent with Francis’s (1995) findings. He notes that structure and the built elements are ranked second to the higher ranking of vegetal preferences.

The structure and hard landscaping of the ‘ideal’ garden

Within the responses asking for inclusions for an ‘ideal garden’ was a noticeable and more dominant preference for more structural landscaping detail by the Australian group than the English group.

“I build structures”

Not only were the suggestions of structural origin described, the terms “structures”, “structured” and the desire for “structure” and hard landscaping elements were actually named or included by the Australian participants. Ideals suggested by the Australian group included:

“Possibly a large area for exotics, for sculpture and texture...”

“Structured but not formal, abundant flora, ordered”

“water, rocks, pebbles and all sorts of different shapes and sizes of trees. Plus anything that would bring the wildlife...the sounds of nature are important”
There was a noticeable difference between the Australian and English groups in that none of the English group made any mention of a desire for hard landscaping apart from one gentleman lay participant who stated simply that he would have

“no hard landscaping with the exception of a small patio to sit on”.

Conversely, the Australian results included both plant, structural and landscaping details. They were quite specific in parts about the landscape design and several participants mentioned a preference for designed areas that allowed them to “hide away” in a landscape containing “paths”, a “little secret place”, “lots of little corners” and “little walkways that wander into separate secluded areas”. Other design features specifically mentioned included designated curved areas for vistas, with the design allowing for “hidden areas and rooms”, and “secret places where you can go and be on your own” behind the “curving paths”.

Lewis (1996) argues that paths, walkways and vistas are a reminiscent link to our innate preferences of landscape which provided security and safety to our earliest ancestors, thereby ensuring the survival of the species. Human preferences for landscape are partially derived from an evolved psychology that aided early man’s determination about his movements and activities during that process (Orians and Heerwagen, 1992) and landscape preference studies have determined that (logically) it was safer to see than be seen. These “little walkways” chosen within landscape preferences were generally curved rather than a straight path making concealment possible.

Other insights emerging from landscape preference studies indicate that, in general, open forest, curving paths, water inclusions, and “a preference for an ordered and diverse environment over that which contained a singular vegetation variety or that which was considered “wild” or disordered” (Lewis, 1996) are preferred. Such environments are considered beneficial to human health as they reduce stress levels, promote well-being, and provide tranquil and peaceful settings in which people can enjoy ‘time out’.
This type of landscape can also be described as a complex landscape and these are preferred to flat and featureless landscapes, as noted by Ulrich, (1983). On the other hand, scenes that were well-defined, parklike settings with complexity, such as the vertical aspects of trees, were more preferred and could be “readily grasped in three dimensions” (p. 106).

The results of this research suggest that the combined English participant group prefer designs with minimal structure and hard landscaping which is consistent with Ulrich’s findings. I suggest that there is an inherent link to styles popularised by landscape designers such as ‘Capability’ Brown whose designs, according to some, epitomize the English style of garden which makes the participants feel ‘comfortable’ with the scene.

The struggle of survival has also been overcome in England and is less necessary within English gardening at this stage as the culture has been around for many centuries and the sources for food have been well established. This move to aesthetics over survival has been replicated within the history of Australian gardens, as once the settlements were established the pleasure gardens were begun (Baskin & Dixon, 1996; Timms, 2006).

And in contrast, it could be argued that the practical-oriented answers from the Australian participants bear relation to the relative ‘youth’ of Australia’s colonial horticultural past, being just over two hundred years young in comparison to the many centuries within England’s history. The active, disciplined and achievement-oriented approach to gardening as illustrated by the Australian participants’ reflections might arguably be typical of the approaches in place within early colonial times to ensure the survival of the colony. That this preference and promotion of practicality within the present Australian gardening ethos could indicate the continuation of a thread of the colonial survival instinct from two hundred and nineteen years ago, yet continuing within the modern era and for much the same modern motivation.

When asked to nominate their preferences for the gardens illustrated within the photo-elicted emotional response inventory exercise, both the Australian and English
participants chose picture H as their preferred setting. Pictures were ranked on a scale of 1-8 with 1 denoting their most preferred picture. As such, the average ranking for picture H by the English participants was slightly higher at 2.2 than the Australian average of 2.71 (see Appendix 5). The nominations of inclusions for ‘garden ideals’ were also consistent with the image preference ranking results which showed picture H as the most preferred picture for both the combined English and combined Australian participants.

Table 7. The Mean ranking of Australian, English and combined average populations

| Pic Pref # | Australian | English | Av. Pop
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Most preferred</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 A/B tie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 B/A tie</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 E</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Least preferred</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Picture H showed an informal design with large trees, dappled light, sweeping lawn and a water feature prominently positioned in the photograph with the background suggesting hidden corners and quiet walkways – inclusions which were often featured by the participants in their mental creation of the ‘ideal’ garden.

This picture elicited responses which covered every primary emotion category and nearly every secondary emotion category, often with only one response noted to sanction its inclusion. However, the dominant primary and associated dominant secondary responses (listed in order of frequency) for picture H were:

Comfortable – harmonious, nostalgic
Inspired – interested, awakened
Peaceful – at one with nature, relaxed, tranquil, calm, harmonious, peaceful
Satisfied – maintained, well designed
Again, all participants are, however in complete agreement about the two least preferred images. Picture D – showing a heavily grey-paved courtyard with water feature and minimal planting was the second least preferred, while picture G was the least preferred. This picture showed an almost commercial landscape with an open area of paved walkways around large circular brick-edged beds filled with similar sorts of plantings repeated in each bed.

The results for picture D reveal the dominant primary emotion responses with their associated secondary dominant emotions (in order of frequency) as:
Dissatisfied – characterless, no atmosphere, unfulfilled
Indifferent – bland
Uncomfortable – edgy
Interestingly, there were some positive emotions attached to picture D and the dominant primary and secondary results (in order of frequency) are:

Peaceful – relaxed
Satisfied – organised, planned
Comfortable – happy

These positive results were predominantly nominated by the Australian lay participants.

The results for picture G reveal the dominant primary emotion responses with their associated secondary dominant emotions (in order of frequency) as:

Dissatisfied – characterless, no atmosphere, featureless, unfulfilled, themeless
Indifferent – bland, uninspired, indifferent, unimpressed
Saddened – disappointed, displeased
Annoyed – wasted space

On segregating the results into participant subsections of Australian and English, professional and lay, however, the results reveal that only the Australian Professional and both the English Professional and Lay participants chose picture H as their most preferred.

The Australian lay participants chose picture B (mean = 3) as their most preferred – a wild but colourful hillside with virtually no visible structure apart from a path within the planting. This appears to go against an ‘ordered environment’, what is generally considered the more preferable environment within landscape preference studies (Lewis, 1996), and the earlier omission of mention of colour in the participant’s nominated ‘ideal’ gardens.
Figure 16. Most preferred pictures chosen by the Australian lay participants (B) and picture H, chosen by the three remaining groups (AE, EP and EL) as the most preferred picture.

Picture E – an intimate shaded courtyard with a variety of green foliage plants surrounding a sunken pond – was the Australian lay participants second choice (mean = 3.16) and picture F – an open garden with a large expanse of lawn edging a large lake and plant border with minimal flower colour – as their third choice (mean = 3.33) (see Appendix 2.2). The picture most preferred by the other three groups – picture H – was ranked fifth out of a total of eight pictures by the Australian lay participants, with a mean figure of 4.16.

Figure 17. The second choice (picture E) and third choice (picture F) of the Australian lay group.

This seemingly varied approach to what the Australian lay participants prefer as a favoured style suggests that, similar to many other assertions about Australian garden style (Earwaker & Robertson, 2003), there is a wide variety of styles but no characteristic garden style within Australia. This issue was discussed in Chapter 4 with reference to the *Oz nouveau* concept which aimed at introducing a ‘style’ to Australian
gardeners which they could adopt ‘as their own’. This concept failed to ignite the interest within Australian gardeners sufficiently to consider it a type of Australian garden. Thus the eclecticism of Australian gardening design continues, and no better place is this illustrated than within these picture preference results.

To explore the difference between these results further, the descriptors nominated when looking at these pictures were explored. During the photo-elicited emotional response inventory component, the participants chose descriptors which expressed how the picture made them feel. The most dominant and most nominated descriptors by the Australian Lay participants for picture B (their most preferred picture) were the primary emotions of *peaceful*, *comfortable* and *aroused* with the secondary emotion descriptors of *feeling at one with nature*, *carefree*, *curious*, *interest*, *intrigued* and *stimulated*.

Their dominant and most nominated primary and secondary emotion descriptors of picture H, however, included the primary emotions of *peaceful* and *aroused* with the secondary emotions of *feeling at one with nature*, *calm*, *curious*, *harmony* and *interest*. As shown in the diagram below, there is little overlap in the terms expressed by the AL group for the two pictures apart from *at one with nature*, *curious* and *interest*.

Both picture B and picture H offered a sense of ‘nature’, curiosity and interest, which could explain the interest in both pictures, however the Australian lay participants’ preference for the emotions of *carefree*, *intrigued* and *stimulated* shows that they rated them as more important that the *calm* and *harmony* secondary emotions preferred by the remaining three participant groups.
Table 8. Comparison of emotions of the Australian Lay Participants towards Picture B (ranked the most preferred picture by AL group) and Picture (H) which was ranked fifth by the AL group but highest by the remaining three groups (AP, EP & EL).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Picture B</th>
<th>Picture H</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At one with nature</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carefree</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curious</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrigued</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stimulated</td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Picture B, with its differentiated descriptions of carefree, intrigued and stimulated could be classed as a reflection of the Australian way of life, with its carefree and relaxed lifestyle and approach to living (Trimble, 1995; AHC, 2001; NIAA, 2001). This reflection of the Australian way of life demonstrates a preference for comfort and familiarity over too much design or ‘style’, which is shown as being less comfortable and acceptable to the Australian lay participants.

With the aspects of lifestyle and difference of perceptions in mind, further exploring this connection would be an interesting topic for future research. It would be interesting to repeat the process but using much larger numbers to see if this would be replicated. In summary, the verbal response preferences of both groups, therefore, were towards the softer, more aesthetic and traditional English-style plant choices and planting style to fill their ‘perfect gardens’. These results corresponded to the picture preferences for the English professional and lay groups, however the Australian lay group exhibited an eclecticism within their responses from the photo-elicitation component of this research.
Before looking at the data for this subsection, it is necessary to differentiate between the
garden as a place of activity and the activity of gardening. The definition of the activity
of gardening is the physical tending and nurturing of the garden. This may include
maintenance practices, propagation practices, irrigating, pruning, weeding and mowing.
Australian participants within this research project have indicated that practical issues
are seen as important and preferred within their gardening practices. This activity of
gardening is, however, not included within the garden as a place during this study, and
as such shall be discussed in the following chapter, Chapter 8: The Glory of Gardening
and Gardeners.

The garden as a place of activity, however, is a different concept which doesn’t involve
the intimate association of tending the earth that the activity of gardening does, but
focuses instead on the space of the garden.

As part of the data collection process, all participants were asked to verbalise a mental
creation of their ‘ideal’ garden that could feature anything they desired. Results from
this task are described within the section entitled a place for perfection and showed that
nearly all of the Australian participants referred to activity or action within their
description of their mentally created ‘ideal’ garden. They either specified chores “I like
working” or noted their desire for areas of activity such as “a vege patch” or of exercise
where participants expressed the desire for “paths” and “little walkways that wander”
into a “space for trees and for walking and sitting”. “I’d like a garden I could wander
through” was another response.

Each of these descriptions include some reference to ‘doing’ something and indicate the
importance of practicality and activity within the Australian participants’ responses.
Terms used included “I like working”, “climbing tracks”, “I could wander” and “walking
and sitting” illustrated a desire for achievement and motion.
The participants were asked to describe what they did most when they ventured into the
garden. One English participant who is the sole carer for his disabled wife shared his
reason “I go into the garden to cool off!” Then he goes for a walk to see what needs
doing and “occasionally I go for a specific purpose”. “Tidying” was another reason for
venturing into the garden. This female EL said “I like to keep it right” and does
“deadhead” and “weed”. She does admit to going into the garden “to relax but not often
as there’s always something to do”. Although gardeners seem to find “something to do”
during garden visits, one EP said he often intends to straighten things up “but find myself
just wandering and touching the plants – inspecting them, I suppose”.

One EL told how she likes “to sit and watch and listen – the little birds play in the
hedge”. Another told how she uses some of her garden time as “a break from indoor
work, but then I forget to go back inside – I get so caught up”. These little garden rituals
allow for a mental break, as described by this EP “my ritual is to take my early morning
tea as I walk around my garden – it’s very private. It’s a time of peace and allows me to
get my thoughts straight for the day”.

Australian gardeners also succumb to the lure of the garden. As with the English
participants, there appears to be a common theme of going into the garden for one
reason before being distracted by another task or occurrence. One AL related how she
goes into the garden for “the beauty of it... to see what’s coming out and to admire the
flowers”. She then described her passion for building structures before expanding into
other garden tasks of “mowing, pruning, moving soil”. Another AL said she likes “being
there and enjoying it all... observing – to see what needs tending [sic] to”.

One AL admitted she went into the garden for the enjoyment of “propagating plants and
then growing them up and giving them away. It’s a pleasure to pass them on to someone
else”. This revealed a social side to the garden and was confirmed by an elderly AL who
told me that in retirement the garden becomes “a great part of life” and that she joined
the garden club in her retirement, and many of the members are retired or elderly.
Most of the tasks carried out were not necessarily scheduled as one AL related, she goes “into the garden each day to see what’s blooming and what needs pruning, what needs replacing, a drink or tidying – I always have my secateurs with me”. Although she has a garden plan for the week, this is not always adhered to and she likens herself to “a bee that goes from one plant to the next”.

To augment the data collected from the interview, participants completed other components including the emotions sphere and arousal matrices (see Chapter 5 Methodology for details of these components). The results from the emotions sphere, which was designed to extract descriptors located in practical and spiritual domains in response to the question about what a garden meant to the participant, shows that the Australian participants chose the terms *creative space* and *satisfying* as their most dominant descriptors within this component which asked participants to choose terms from a listing of 24 descriptors to encapsulate what a garden meant to them. The combined Australian groups results showed little difference between the results for practical and spiritual, but a greater difference between perceptions was once again noted when the combined Australian group was broken down into its components of professional and lay (see Table 9 below).

### Table 9. Breakdown of results from Practical and Spiritual concepts into participant groups.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the Australian results, the professional group showed a strong preference for practical issues with 66% of terms chosen being a descriptor deemed ‘practical’ within the listing of terms. The lay group however showed less preference towards the practical terms (42%) and more towards the spiritual descriptors.
Interestingly a similar pattern is shown within the English results. Whereas the average of the Australian participants showed a marginally higher preference for spiritual descriptors, the English participants, both within their individual components of professional and lay participants, and in the combined total, showed a predilection towards spiritual and philosophical concepts and had a slightly higher preference for the spiritual descriptors.

The English lay participants, however, showed more ‘equality’ towards the preference of particular terms, even though the spiritual terms remained more dominant. This is demonstrated by the English lay results for spiritual being 56% while the English professional group showed a stronger preference for spiritual descriptor terms with a result of 62%.

Both professional groups showed a stronger preference to their preferred concept (either spiritual or practical) whereas the lay participants were more evenly represented.

Another indicator was used to determine any dominance of feeling towards practical or spiritual concepts by participants in the form of a scale rating exercise, an adaptation of a Likert scale, which covered several concepts of garden and gardening within the research. The scale rating statements used to explore the garden as a place of activity were ‘gardens are places for “doing” rather than “thinking”’ and ‘I see the garden as a place to work’. All participants plotted their levels of agreement on a 9 point rated scale exercise which showed that they either strongly disagree (1) or strongly agree (9) with the statement.

The result for the first statement regarding gardens being places for ‘doing’ rather than ‘thinking’, showed little difference between the two countries. The Australian participants indicated a position of 6.75 from a maximum of nine which indicated they agree with the statement and the English participants were only marginally less agreeable than the Australian participants to this statement with an average rating of 6.25.
The statement ‘I see the garden as a place to work’ had a more definite result. The Australian participants expressed that they strongly agreed that the garden was a place to work and plotted their response in a more strongly agreeable position at 7.25 (see Figure 18 below).

![Figure 18. Scale Rating Responses from Australian and English participants.](image)

Although the two sentences in the scale convey similar meanings, the descriptors are different and denote a subtly different concept and it is this difference which I feel makes the English result more noticeable. In the first statement, the term used was ‘doing’ and the English responses were similar in result to the Australian groups. However, in the second statement the term used was ‘work’ and this is where the difference is most noticeable. Work, as shown by these results, has a different implication to the English people. They don’t see ‘doing’ things in the garden as work – doing could encompass a wide variety of actions possibly including some enjoyable and less taxing tasks, such as pottering about, thinking or strolling, whereas work is a very definite description of labour and this is rated as less preferable.
Another approach to discovering the participants’ opinions and perceptions was in the completion of an arousal matrix which described their approach to the garden as a place for activity. The matrix was used by participants to plot a circle in a position that best described how they felt about the garden as a place for activity. They were also instructed to size their circle as an indication of the importance placed on their response.

According to the results for the combined Australian participants (see Figure 19 below), the majority of the Australian participants found the garden as a place in which they could engage in a variety of mid to highly creative activities which were rated as pleasant to highly pleasant. The majority of the cluster features in the centre of the upper half of the matrix denoting that participants considered the garden as a place to work, but which didn’t rate highly as an area for rest and therapeutic uses. The size of the circles in this left hand side of the matrix were smaller and this denotes a lesser importance or liking. One of the participants plotted a very large circle in the areas denoting his interests as more towards the high arousal end of the spectrum and something they felt was important or enjoyed.

![Figure 19. Matrix responses of all Australian participants to 'the garden as a place of activity'.](image)
The combined English matrix results (see Figure 20), however, showed a range of ‘pleasant’ feelings with some responses in the ‘unpleasant/low arousal’ quadrant unlike the Australian responses which were all within ‘pleasant’ quadrants. The less ‘pleasant’ concept is here associated with maintenance and work within the garden.

![Figure 20. Matrix responses of all English participants to ‘the garden as a place of activity’.

The results of the matrix also showed a much lower arousal response by the English participants to the garden as a place of activity when compared to the results from the Australian participants. This can be seen in the dominance of the cluster to the low arousal side of the matrix. Another difference between the combined English and the combined Australian participants is shown in this matrix with the loosely clustered responses. These denote the widely varying perceptions towards ‘the garden as a place of activity’ as expressed by the participants.
In summary, the results of this matrix reveal that the English participants viewed the garden (as a place of activity) as being an area for more relatively low-key and relaxed activities that are considered enjoyable and pleasant but that their responses strayed into the areas of unpleasantness, such as maintenance.

The results of the English lay participants showed a preference towards the low arousal quadrants, and stretching from the ‘unpleasant’ activities to the more positive ‘pleasant’ activities. When the results from the Australian lay participants was overlaid to form a combined ‘lay’ matrix, a similarity in results was revealed, showing that this combined group of lay participants preferred a calm and low stimulation experience within the garden. The combined lay participants’ responses (see Figure 21 below) are clustered within the areas of low arousal side and range between the negative/unpleasant levels associated with constant maintenance and the neutral to positive/pleasant levels associated with a relaxed, low arousal experience which doesn’t involve creative aspects or highly active properties. Regardless of the degree of pleasantness, lay participants saw ‘the garden as a place of activity’ as a predominantly low arousal experience.

Figure 21. Matrix responses of the combined lay participants to ‘the garden as a place of activity’.
In contrast, when the results for the combined professional participants’ responses are plotted on the matrix they show a tighter cluster of plottings in the upper half of the matrix denoting a mid to highly pleasant experiential rating.

The majority of plotted responses within this matrix tend to group themselves towards the quadrant relating to mid to high arousal and denoted by the terms building, creative design and planting. This would be consistent with professionals who create and provide visual excitement and stimulation for clients as part of their career descriptions.

In contrast, the majority of the combined lay plotted responses featured in the low arousal area of the matrix that features ‘social’ descriptors. This contrast shows that non-career minded gardeners and horticulturists prefer to relax and let nature ‘take its course’ as far as decisions regarding activity in the garden occurs, whereas the professional

Figure 22. Matrix responses of the combined professional participants to ‘the garden as a place of activity’.

The majority of plotted responses within this matrix tend to group themselves towards the quadrant relating to mid to high arousal and denoted by the terms building, creative design and planting. This would be consistent with professionals who create and provide visual excitement and stimulation for clients as part of their career descriptions.

In contrast, the majority of the combined lay plotted responses featured in the low arousal area of the matrix that features ‘social’ descriptors. This contrast shows that non-career minded gardeners and horticulturists prefer to relax and let nature ‘take its course’ as far as decisions regarding activity in the garden occurs, whereas the professional
participants have no choice in the decisions due to time constraints and perceived levels of expectation by the professional, employees/employers and clients alike.

In summary, the results for the subsection investigating the garden as a place of activity revealed that Australian participants are more prone to an active usage of the garden with activities that provide a relatively high level of stimulation and arousal. These could be activities such as sports and games, barbecues, swimming pools and other interactive behaviour. English participants, in contrast, prefer less stimulating usage of their gardens but still want to experience something relatively enjoyable. They view their gardens as more of a calm and relaxing area which is used less for ‘work’ (associated with chores), although they like ‘doing’ things within the garden.
…a place of attraction

As part of the interview process, participants were asked to describe what it was that they believed attracted people to gardens. Gardens were considered places of attraction by the professional participant groups and lay participant groups but for different reasons. It was noticeable that some of the responses from the professional group focussed on the garden design and concepts displayed within a garden. These examples shown below are from the English professional participants.

“Pure curiosity – to see what they’re all about and to pick up ideas. To see how big gardens have been done and to experience a change of scenery”

“To admire the beauty created by keen gardeners (or by their gardeners!), often in dimensions well above what the general population are used to”

Similarly, two Australian professional participants added their views that

“People are always looking for new ideas to transpose onto their gardens. It’s like the Open Garden Scheme where everyone comes to look at how someone has used their space with design and plants, and unfortunately for the Open Garden owner, their gardening ideas and designs are often not the only things to be “pinched” during the visit”

“To see other people’s interpretations of a garden and to gather ideas…”

In contrast, the lay gardeners of Australia and England displayed similarity of opinions. Beauty was noted as an important attractant to gardens:

“to see beauty”
“the visual beauty”
“green space, beautiful trees...seeing and being in a beautiful place”
“some gardens are visually attractive – you turn the corner and get that WOW factor”

and the “pleasure to go and see someone else’s garden” to “see something nice”, or to see some “nicely set out gardens” were amongst the responses. The “feeling of peace”, “the restfulness of the garden”, “peaceful walks” and “the quietness” of those “peaceful
places with places to walk and see something” were also deemed significant by the lay participants. One English participant referred to the peace experienced within a garden as an atmosphere of “ancient peace”. He believed this feeling of “ancient peace” could still be found in England even though “there are so many of us gardeners and we live so close together”.

The lay participants also referred to other senses in their responses (“to taste, to touch, to see and to hear”), using them to “absorb the ambience” and “the smell”. These sensory responses combined with the beauty and peaceful places provided a reason behind the attraction of gardens. One lay participant offered a deeper explanation of the senses within the garden which he termed as Sutvah. He explained this was a

“quality of quietness and peace and consciousness. People can relax and their five senses are engaged, and that brings out a quality of living itself when you have something to smell, to taste, to touch, to see and to hear, such as the birds. Engaging the five senses actually brings you fully conscious and more to life”.

Some of the other reasons the lay groups attributed to the reason that gardens are attractive was that they made for a pleasant day out, somewhere to visit and that it:

“gives a gardener pleasure to go and see someone else’s garden”.

Many of the reasons explicated by the lay participants were of an aesthetic and sensory nature or were related to enjoyment from a day out. The professional participant’s responses were more design and ideas driven, and were considerably more structural than those of the lay participants. These results are corroborated by the results of the combined professional responses against the combined lay responses in the arousal matrix exploring ‘The Garden as an Entity’.

Participants were asked to place a circle onto the matrix at the point they believed best described how they felt about the garden as an entity, using a circle size appropriate to their ‘size’ of emotion.
The matrix shows that while both groups clearly experienced highly ‘pleasant’ feelings in a garden, the responses of the professional participants were more clustered around the more highly aroused ‘inspirational/reverential’ quadrant. Professional participants appeared more highly aroused by gardens as a place of attraction as a professional or learning outcome as shown in a large cluster of plotted responses in the area of high arousal (see Figure 23).

![Figure 23. Matrix responses by all professional participants to ‘the garden as an entity’.](image)

Conversely, the plotted responses by the lay participants were clustered equally towards the lower arousal points of the ‘meditational/tranquil’ quadrant of the matrix (see Figure 24) which supports the ‘day out’, “peaceful walks” and other general interest-type responses of attraction to gardens by the lay participants.
We know that gardens are attractive places to visit and enjoy as seen by the popularity and number of gardens within both Australia’s Open Garden Scheme (AOGS) (2007) and English National Gardens Scheme (2007), as the AOGS has around 8000 gardens listed within the scheme and the English National Garden Scheme Yellow Book includes details of around 3500 mostly private gardens for the public to visit. Garden shows and exhibitions also testify to the popularity of seeing ideas and experiencing aesthetic and creative beauty (Evans, 1999; Gibson, 2002). This data augments our knowledge of the reasons behind these phenomenon’s of attraction, and reveals a difference of approach to the simple art of enjoying a garden as a ‘place of attraction’ between professional and lay participants.

Figure 24. Matrix responses by all lay participants to ‘the garden as an entity’.
...a place of personal meaning

One of the research objectives was to explore what gardens meant to people and whether the meanings were universal or whether cultural background played a role in the type or depth of the feelings being expressed. To explore this issue the participants contributed their opinions and knowledge through interviews and the components of the emotions sphere and scale rating statements.

What does the garden mean to you?

Within the supporting booklet was a section entitled ‘The Emotion Sphere’ which was devised to aid elicitation of what the garden meant to participants. The participant was instructed to nominate as many of the descriptors within the sphere as they felt were needed to express their opinion of this topic (see Table 10 below). These descriptors were equally divided into two categories – physical and philosophical/spiritual – however these divisions were known only to me and as the descriptors were arranged alphabetically within the sphere, there was no indication of any division. The division was formulated to aid the discovery of whether there may be a preference towards a practical or a spiritual aspect of what the garden meant to the participants.

Table 10. Identifying descriptors from Emotions Sphere

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophical/Spiritual</th>
<th>Physical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Divine Presence</td>
<td>Complementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalistic</td>
<td>Controlled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurturing</td>
<td>Creative Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaceful</td>
<td>Cultivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refreshing</td>
<td>Organised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxing</td>
<td>Physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewing</td>
<td>Practical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romantic</td>
<td>Productive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>Purposeful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status Symbol</td>
<td>Satisfying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpretentious</td>
<td>Structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilderness</td>
<td>Survival</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results from the Australian groups showed a preference towards practical aspects of the terms. Within the AP group, all but one nominated the ideals of *creative space* and *satisfying* within the sphere, followed by *cultivation, peaceful, practical, purposeful* and *renewing*. All but one of the AL group also nominated the ideals of *creative space* and *satisfying* as well *peaceful* and *relaxing*. Within the parameters of the practical and spiritual divisions of descriptors the total Australian participants showed an average of 49% practical and 51% spiritual. When broken down further, the results showed that the AP group nominated descriptors were 66% practical and 34% spiritual. The AL group nominated descriptors were 42% practical and 58% spiritual.

The interview question which asked participants what the garden meant to them received some unusual replies from the Australian lay participants. One participant launched into an account of a dispute she was having with her local council over the seemingly indiscriminate tree-lopping occurring in her street. She was quite distressed during this discourse, and told me she had chosen her home because of the trees featured within the streetscape. She talked about times when the natural fauna may have been allowed to co-exist [with people]. She said her strength of emotion about the tree-lopping was due to the importance she placed on her garden and what it meant to her, and expressed an opinion that gardeners were more sensitive towards the environment and that “*trees and greenery have more effect on gardeners than on non-gardeners*”.

Other responses from this group included the awareness of change “*different seasons have different green and different foliages*” and restorative concepts “*I find it soothing*”, and similarly “*I find it mentally soothing*”.

One Australian lay participant related that she found it easier to express what the garden means to her “*through her art*”, which in itself is a practical action. She admitted that she felt that she was “*not good at putting her hands in the dirt*”. These participant responses relating an inability to express their emotions and opinions to the garden have been noted elsewhere in this research study. This is most noticeable when contrasted with the English responses as these are generally richer and more descriptive in content.
The results for the combined English participants returned a result of 43% practical and 57% spiritual. This was broken down further to show that the English professional group chose the descriptors nurturing four times and spiritual three times. Other descriptors chosen included creative space, peaceful, physical, practical, productive, refreshing, relaxing, renewing and romantic. The division of descriptors was predominantly philosophical/spiritual (62%) and 38% practical. The EL group results showed a marginal tendency towards the use of spiritual descriptors (53%) over the practical descriptors (47%) and chose the descriptors peaceful, relaxing, creative space, satisfying and spiritual as the top five. These results are supported by data collected from the interview sessions where the English participants expressed their thoughts as:

“The nurturing, caring, tending – it’s all a very pleasurable experience”

One English lay participant noted that “I shouldn’t always want to be a part of doing it, but I always like to be a part of seeing it and experiencing it”. Aside from the tending and caring aspect of their responses, there was a very intimate and personal comment from another English participant who shared “It makes me feel humble”.

Practical issues were also discussed within the topic of what gardens meant to the English group and one participant shared his passion about its meaning to him by expressing: “I love growing, creating and building gardens. I love watching things grow, and growing vegetables is the most rewarding part of horticulture”. He looked enthralled as he related these concepts.

These results showed a consistency towards the hypothesis that the English groups were more philosophically minded and that Australians were more practically oriented. The results also showed a definite trend that the English professional participants were more aligned and more relaxed with spiritual concepts whereas Australian professional participants were more responsive to practical aspects. The English and Australian Professional participants selected descriptors in their hypothesised orientation in proportions of 62% and 66% respectively while both lay groups, in contrast, reported relatively neutral results.
In further exploration of the question ‘what does the garden mean to you’ participants were instructed to imagine that the garden was a person and were then asked to describe the characteristics and traits they ascribed to this ‘person’. The results of this reification exercise gave insights into the participant’s personal connections with nature and the garden.

The Australian participants described a very “placid, soothing and tranquil” personality that was “embracing”, “welcoming” and “friendly”, and one that “can introduce you to people”. They noted a sense of “calm” and comfort within the garden’s personality, along with a sense of “mystery” and reflection. The garden was not considered to be “abrasive”, “aggressive” or “strict, but not lax either – balanced”. Although predominantly revealing a “happy” and “tranquil”, “peaceful”, “restful” and “serene” persona, the garden was also attributed as being “exuberant and fresh” and “allowed to be a little bit wild and inventive”.

The English participants introduced a ‘personality’ with noticeably more energy and breadth of character than the Australian participants had proposed. The English participants’ garden ‘friend’ was “gentle”, “generous and kind” and “should be nurtured and cared for”, and because “we don’t grasp its full power” it “shouldn’t be taken for granted”. This strength of character was reiterated with descriptions of a “watchful”, “humorous and mirthful” being who was “full of personality” and “powerful” with “plenty of energy”. This “multi-faceted” and “omnipresent” personality was also described being a “demanding and continuing taskmaster”. On the lighter side, the garden was described as “stylish” and having a charismatic and alluring streak that was “bewitching”, “enticing” and “full of surprises”. There was depth to the personality as well which was encapsulated as “serene” and “spiritual”, “thoughtful” and “comfortable”, “caring” and “nurturing”.

The descriptions of the garden’s persona, as ascribed by the English participants, contain noticeably richer and more active descriptors. It suggests a better ‘knowledge’ of the gardens ‘personality’ and, as with human relationships, a more solid friendship. The
richness and increased descriptiveness of the English participant’s answers have been noted throughout this thesis, and again they are consistent with the hypothesis that the English participants are displaying a more comfortable people-plant relationship which has continued with an unbroken thread throughout history from the earliest Celtic religions that venerated nature and the green world.

These assertions are also supported by the results from the photo-elicited emotional response inventory. The English participants more often chose the finer descriptors which gave a more complex picture, for example at one with nature was chosen six times by the English participants to describe Picture H (the most preferred picture as ranked by all combined participants), but only twice by Australian participants.

Similarly with Picture H, the English participants used the descriptor reverential three times whereas the Australian participants did not choose it at all. In total, the number of occurrences where richly descriptive terms were chosen by the English participants for Picture H was 43, which was almost twice the number of descriptive terms chosen by the Australian participants (22).

**How does the garden make you feel?**

Participants were also asked to describe how the garden made them feel. The majority of responses from both Australian and English groups were positive. The AL group reported the following:

“Wonderful. Pleasurable pleasure, not a chore, enjoyable”

“It gives me a good feeling. I feel pleased, relaxed and at peace”

Although this statement above avers that the garden is “not a chore”, the majority of the responses from the Australian lay group demonstrated that activity and practicality played a major role in how the garden makes them feel and that they are given a high rating of importance as to how the garden makes them feel. Whereas most of the AL responses were happy, one elderly lady expressed unhappy emotions about her garden:
“Sad that I can’t do as much to it any more but that boils down to less money as a retiree and that the land is ¾ acre. I could have done more with more money. The positive side is that I’ve learned to propagate.”

This response indicates that the participant’s reason for sadness points towards her increasing inability to utilise the garden in a practical sense. This practicality is denoted in her use of “I can’t do as much to it” and “I’ve learned to propagate”. It shows that her view of her relationship with the garden is based on activity and practical aspects, despite the fact that the relationship is being forced to change.

Another participant in the AL group also noted a negative emotion, although this was, as she reports, more through frustration than sadness:

“Frustrated, tired, but I get great satisfaction from it. I’m aware I now have to limit my physical activity [due to increasing age] but I still feel happy and fulfilled”.

Her responses also denote a practical orientation towards the garden and her use of the terms “great satisfaction” and “my physical activity” confirm this.

A third Australian lay participant also mentions practical aspects when she says she feels:

“Very happy and fulfilled because I made it myself. Very serene and very pleased I’ve got it. It’s very peaceful”

Another participant in the AL group reported her feeling of satisfaction and achievement combined with a generosity of spirit which was noted within many of the gardeners interviewed within this research process. Her response was that she felt:

“Happy. I get out there first thing in the morning and feel satisfied that it’s mine and that I achieved it. I hope it brings happiness to others as well”.

Both of the terms, satisfied/satisfaction and achievement were deemed to have practical connotations, both as an outcome from the analysis of literature which occurred early in this research project and as descriptors within the Emotions Sphere component.

Responses from the Australian professional participants were more powerful in their concept and contained noticeably more references to science and design. One AP
expressed her sense of wonder about the garden by saying:

“I suppose it’s a sense of wonder, a sense of wonder at how powerful nature is…the feeling that you can put a seed in the ground and it becomes a plant and you can eat its produce. It’s just incredible”

Unusually for the Australian participants, these emotional responses were quite powerful, demonstrated by the choice of strongly descriptive terms, however these were responses by the professional participants and this group had previously shown more of a passionate approach in describing gardens than the lay participants.

“It can make me feel fantastic or it can leave me frustrated and disappointed. Creating something yourself is a deeply satisfying feeling as you mould the garden to your desires and designs. It makes me feel powerful when what is planned is successful, but it can also be heartbreaking when a favourite plant dies or some activity you’d attempted didn’t work out as you’d planned”

Garden design features were mentioned within the interview results and one AP stated:

“My garden is not a showpiece. It’s something I like pottering in, and something I try to impress on people is you don’t try and make your garden look like one you saw in Vogue Living, you make it something that gives you pleasure. It may be just a collection of plants, and you may not put them together in a very artistic way...”.

It is the action of being involved with the garden that was important to this AP and she gets “a thrill from just going out and dividing up perennials and replanting them, and cutting things back and just putting the garden in order” and the tasks which bring pleasure are not necessarily those requiring expertise or education, as can be seen by the previous participant comment. Even “quite mundane things, like weeding and digging” can be good for the soul, she said. “Getting hands into the soil, I think, is really important for the psyche”.

The term “psyche” was not mentioned by the lay participants. It was, however, featured several times throughout both the Australian and English professional participant responses, both as a named term and as a concept.

The use of the term “psyche” denotes a deeper connection with gardens and nature by the participant. Other participants within the AP group expressed other emotions, such
as “The garden calms me...I feel good after I’ve been in the garden”. Some of these terms had been used as secondary emotions within the photo-elicited emotional response inventory exercise and were clustered under the primary emotions of ‘uplifted’ and ‘peaceful’. An example is the response which expressed “I feel a lot of joy sometimes when I’m in the garden. It’s where I can feel really relaxed and peaceful too”.

In general, the responses from the Australian participants were more noticeably referring to activities and actions carried out within the garden more than the garden as a place and that the concept of the garden was interlocked with doing something in the garden. Therefore each experience within the garden for the Australian participants was an actively physical one. This is demonstrated within their descriptions of how the garden made them feel when they each mentioned terms such as “chore”, “can’t do as much to it any more”, the learned skill of propagating, “I made it myself”, “I achieved it” – it is all physical activity. The term satisfaction seems to be interpreted as an “act of satisfying” (Macquarie, 1996, p. 1562) in a physical sense rather than a sensory sense.

The orientation of responses towards practical and physical aspects is supported by the results of the Emotions Sphere. The combined Australian results showed the descriptors creative space and satisfying as being the most selected to describe ‘what the garden meant to them’ (see Appendix 6).

These results parallel my initial discussions with colleagues that Australians have a predominance towards practical issues, and that most gardening issues pertain to primarily a physical interaction and relationship with plants and the garden, all of which are in keeping with West’s statement that the Australians have more of a utilitarian approach to gardens (Cains, 2001).

The English participants, however, referred more to their spiritual and personal relationships with the garden. Some of their responses included comments describing their physical responses:

“Relaxed... peaceful” (EL)
“I can relax in the garden. Some people think it’s hard work but it’s not. Once I’m out there I lose myself in it” (EL)

while others focussed more on a more spiritual and nature-oriented relationship with the garden

“Peaceful; respectful; close to the heartbeat of the Earth” (EP).

The English gardeners appeared to be more aware and describe the natural undercurrents of the garden with ease and comfort, such as the English professional participant who still finds nature incredibly fascinating and admits she is “In awe that these plants have their cycles year in and year out which could go on without man’s interference” (EP). This is another aspect in which I believe the English participants have a more ‘connected’ relationship with the garden, and the ‘soul’ of the garden, as they see the garden as a living being, and not just as growing plants, but as a growing and responding being. Some gardeners may not see this, however this EP notes that he feels

“Humble, excited, peaceful. The garden makes me feel so many things, but you need to take time out to actually allow yourself to feel something. Many people give it a cursory glance and if it looks right then it must be. They really need to carry out that old adage of taking time to stop and smell the roses”.

One English lay participant related that her relationship with the garden changed throughout the day and that she felt “Different things at different times – like now, quite peaceful and restful. I enjoy it more last thing at night, perhaps, or first thing in the morning when it’s got that fresh feel to it”. This participant was being interviewed in her garden at the end of her day’s work in her garden and she was taking time to enjoy her surroundings. Although she had worked the entire day in the garden, her mien was satisfied, not exhausted, and was similar to another response from an English professional participant who note how he felt at the end of the day after working in the garden:

“Tired! But after a good days work it’s a nice kind of tired where I’ve given my energy in exchange for a deep satisfaction”.

Many of the descriptors here relate to their almost innate feeling to the earth and to the garden. Phrases such as “my energy in exchange for a deep satisfaction”, “the heartbeat of the Earth” and “in awe” reveal a more spiritual appreciation of the garden and a
deeper knowledge of the garden and nature. These results are corroborated by the scale rating statement exercise (see Figure 25) which asked the opinion of the garden as a spiritual place. The English participants (7.7) rated it as a more spiritual place than the Australians (6.75) and within the English results the Professional group (8.2) rated it higher than the Lay group (6.2).

![Figure 25. Average responses from Australian and English participants from the Scale rating statement exercise.](image)

It is also noticeable, again, that the professional participants use stronger and more descriptive language than the lay participants, however the English participants use richer and more descriptive language than the Australian participants. Another noticeable difference between the English participants and the Australian participants were the response choices. The English participants often spoke of their emotions and feelings in relation to the garden and the ‘spirit of nature’, whereas the Australian participants often commented on the more commonplace practical and physical matters, including feelings of “fulfilment” because they’ve “created” or “achieved” something themselves.

In summary, the garden provided the key for participants to conjure emotions and philosophies which explained their personal and intimate understandings of what the garden meant to them and how it made them feel.

The emotions expressed about the garden and how it makes the Australian participants feel included wonder and awe at the natural aspects of the garden. They articulated that they felt “fulfilled” and “satisfied” by the garden and that the garden had the capacity to imbue a sense of “calm” so they had the ability to become “relaxed and peaceful”. The garden was also able to impart a “thrill” and “joy” to the Australian gardeners, but all of
these emotions were overlaid with a sense of the physical and practical issues behind gardening. This is consistent and recurrent theme within this research and reflects other results that show a predominance for physical or active concepts within the Australian gardening group.

The emotions expressed about the garden and how it makes the English participants feel described feelings of relaxation and contentment. One participant noted “I enjoy it more the last thing at night, perhaps, or first thing in the morning when it’s got that fresh feel to it”. Another explained she felt “different things at different times. Like now, quite peaceful and restful, knowing we’re finished for the day”. These calming phrases were echoed by other participants (“fulfilled”, “thankful”, “rejuvenated” and “refreshed”). An astonishing response was the admission “I feel small”. This was due to the gardener feeling so overwhelmed by the garden’s own ‘internal computer’ that told it when to flower, fruit and die, and that there were “so many varied species available to the gardener”. All of these helped, she felt, to put other ‘external issues’ into perspective.

The results from the English participants also included a phrase by an English lay participant which expressed that “some people think it’s hard work but it’s not. Once I’m out there I lose myself in it”. This reference to the garden as “hard work” was noted as a difference between the two groups during the sub-section a place of activity when reviewing the scale statement rating that emphasised the difference of ‘doing’ and ‘work’. Work, as shown by earlier results, has a different implication to the English people. They don’t see ‘doing’ things in the garden as work – doing could encompass a wide variety of actions possibly including some enjoyable and less taxing tasks, such as pruning, pottering about the garden, or having a picnic, whereas work is a very definite description of labour and this is rated as less preferable. This marginal shift in definitions between the two nations has been previously noted during the researching of definitions for the term ‘garden’ within the Macquarie and Oxford English dictionaries. The participants were next asked whether it was the garden or the activity of gardening which evoked the feelings for the garden. As a large proportion of the participants, both Australian and English, professional and lay, nominated that the activity of gardening
evoked these feelings towards the gardens, this section has been included in the next chapter, *Chapter 8: The Glory of Gardening and Gardeners.*

**...a repository for memories**

Gardens and people have been closely associated for centuries and a result of this association is that gardens are also the keepers of memories to be brought from the past into the present through scent, touch, a particular plant or place within the garden. The way we view and interact with nature, too, is shaped by memories and relationships with family and friends (Bhatti & Church, 2001). This concept has been previously documented by others (Bhatti & Church. 2001; Francis, 1995) however my exploration also focuses on the possibility of any cultural similarities or differences appearing within the Australian and English participant groups.

Within the personal interview component the participants were asked if they could relate a memory that was connected to the garden or plants. Some of the participants were able to think of a garden-related memory in an instant, while with others it was a question to ponder. Most memories featured people yet the responses from the Australian and English participants differed quite definitely in their relationships to the participant.

The Australian participants used a wide variety of experiences to describe their memories. Of the lay participants, one described her childhood garden which featured “an air-raid shelter which was filled with spiders. Father turned it into a vegetable garden”. This participant’s memories all related to this childhood garden and she said she could still visualise “the flowers around the yard borders”. Another memory from this participant was of “bushland drives” she would take with her father and grandmother “to pick red gum leaf tips” which they would use in a vase with poppies.

Family and family homes or gardens from childhood were popular recollections by the Australian participants; “We had a walnut tree with a swing in it in my parents’ garden. We used to collect the nuts”, “my grandmother had the most wonderful cottage garden
that we could get lost in” and “the trees filled with apple blossom during our honeymoon in Tasmania”. Friends were also mentioned by one AL who said:

“My garden is full of memories because lots of the plants I have are from my friends’ gardens”.

One lay participant struggled with this question for a while. She then responded with “picking a basket of roses and iris” and “seeing the first tulip come up”. She didn’t look happy with her answer and therefore, after hearing such detailed memories from the other participants, it was a surprise for me to hear this lay participant say she couldn’t recall an “outstanding single memory”. Her reason for this was that “everything in the garden stimulates me!”

Surprisingly, one other participant also struggled with this question as there was “nothing outstanding” and she could think of “no family occasions” as the rest of the family, apart from the participant and her mother, were not gardeners. The participant then related how sad she feels thinking of her mother and that she regrets “that mother never saw it, and the things I brought from her garden are still growing”. This upset the participant so much that she began to cry and was unable to continue with the interview for a few minutes. This emotional response by the participant shows how deeply we can connect our family with familiar garden plants and items, and how a garden can be the catalyst for memory recall, such as the participant bringing plants from her mother’s home and the memories they produced. Although the mother had never personally experienced the participant’s garden, it was the transplanted plants which created the link back to her mother, and triggered the emotional response.

It was noticeable that only a few of the Australian memories pertained to an interaction with another person – whether related or not – and several mentioned another person’s input to the situation without them interacting with the participant within that memory. The following two quotes are examples of this ‘non-interactional’ memory:

“planting a rosemary from a cutting. I remember doing that and pinching it out and tying the wisteria onto the pergola my father had built”
I have deemed this type of memory as ‘non-interactional’ due to its description of the task of tying it up (by the participant) to a pergola that the participant’s father had built, but who was not present at the time of tying. The following quote shows the influence that garden ‘memories’ have:

“we bought this house because there was a large oak tree in the back garden – that has since died, unfortunately – but it was very old, and I had good associations with an oak tree. One of my grandmothers had an oak tree which I thought was a very handsome, lovely tree in their front garden”

Although this memory was not an interaction with the participant’s grandmother, memories of childhood gardens can have an effect on our decisions and desires within an adult garden, as was noted by Francis (1995) who notes that our childhood gardens (and the plants within them) can often be reflected with our choices of garden plantings and design that we choose to incorporate within our own adult gardens.

Another example of a ‘non-interactional’ experience was related by one Australian lay participant spoke of a university course-based wilderness experience which involved three days living solo in a cave:

“I felt safe at night as long as I had a fire. It was as if the trees were talking to me…and there was a plant growing out of a rock, and to me it looked like a ‘rock goddess’ sculpture. I would talk to it for company”

Apart from relating experiences which are seen as ‘non-interactional’, another participant spoke of her ‘relationship’ with a group of strangers brought together as a group on a guided bus tour of gardens along Victoria’s spectacular southern coastline. This professional participant recalled:

“one of the most memorable experiences was going down the Great Ocean Road and they’ve landscaped all the area around the Twelve Apostles, and we were talking about trigger plants and how the insects land on the flower and they trigger this sort of reaction of the flower to pollinate. And we were talking about the different ways that plants pollinate, and it was just so lovely, and I said to my tourists as they were walking down to the Seven Apostles [sic] “have a look – this is a trigger plant here” and I had about ten people all down on their hands and knees, looking at these plants and how nature works. They were fascinated by it, because the intricacies of nature are just so fascinating”
Another Australian professional spoke of accompanying newcomers on bushwalking tours “bushwalking with people who have no knowledge” and she explained that throughout the walks she finds “just pointing out little things about the plants you are walking past” is something that fascinates her as well as the novice bushwalkers. “Getting people interested in it, and [seeing] how fascinating they become, how fascinated. And it all looks like a sea of green when you look at it but when you get up close there’s so much subtlety to talk about and to enjoy, and that’s something I really love doing”. This memory is very clear to the participant who relates emotions and the colour of the area being visited. Although bushland is not a garden, it could be argued that it is part of the Earth’s ‘larger’ garden and that the emotions and engagement with nature is still valid and valuable.

In contrast, the English participant responses to the garden as a repository for memories featured close family members and often the memory described interaction between the participant and that family member. This is quite different from the Australian memory collection which often showed physical or practical activities being carried out individually (isolated experiences) or with others not related by friendship or family, such as the Australian experiences which told of the garden tour group and novice bushwalkers.

Representative examples of the English participant responses included those from the participant’s personal past:

“cutting a camellia flower with my grandfather. I put it in his bedroom. I can remember so well how lovely that flower was”

and those from more recent times:

“I’ve recently been to Italy to visit some gardens and I was blown away by them even though I know that they are now only a shadow of what they were before. Every time you go to a garden you see something and learn something”.

Most, however, involved family and interaction with family members. One lay participant remembers her father and his joy at seeing his favourite yellow-leafed shrub, which she now has in her own garden, and she said he used to comment that it “reminds
me of sunshine all the time”. Another lay participant recalls how “my father grew lupins, beautiful lupins, and we’d tend them together – well, I was allowed to help”.

Parents recalled how children ‘helped’ in the garden and one set of participant grandparents told of their grandson who fell over the trip wire which lay adjacent to their pond. In his rush to ‘help’ his grandson (who was calmly trying to get out of the pond) ‘Grandad’ “forgot about the tripwire which I then fell over and knocked the poor boy back into the pond. He tells everyone how ‘my Grandad saved me from drowning’ although I almost drowned him rather than saved him from it!”

This has become part of the family folklore now and many years later they still have a laugh at this ‘garden’ memory which is easily recalled by the visible presence of the pond in their now much matured garden, in keeping with Brook (2003) and Mayne-Wilson (2005) assertions.

Plants were featured in several memories of family celebrations, such as the celebration of a birth, a wedding or a funeral. One lay participant told how she bought several bushes of the rose cultivar ‘Golden Wedding’ to give to her parents “for their golden wedding anniversary present”. Coincidentally, another participant also spoke of her golden wedding celebration which featured a large party of family and friends, and which was held in their garden. “The garden looked a treat. The roses were blooming and everything looked green and fresh. I felt it added to the day’s celebration”. These recollections bring her great happiness, she says, as she had her whole family and grandchildren around her, and as one son lives overseas with his family, it was a rare occasion for them all to be together and “one to be treasured”.

She related how in following years she looked out at the garden around the time of her wedding anniversary and could recall just what the garden had looked like with the family and friends there. This, she says, brings great happiness to her, as does the rose garden which her son planted for her during their visit. This ease of recollection she attributed to the plants within her garden, which hadn’t changed much since the party.
As in life, memories differ from person to person, and these recalled memories have demonstrated that in some instances they differ from country to country as well. The English participants recalled memories that were predominantly family and people oriented, whereas the Australian participants referred to places or people not related to them, or activities they have carried out, such as tying up wisteria.

The connection of memory to the garden and to plants, it could be argued, is also related to our personal connection to the garden and plants, and as shown in previous results within this chapter, the Australian participants exhibit less of a deep and innate connection with the garden and the green world than the participants from England.
...a place for recreation and relaxation

Gardens can have many meanings and become many things for many different people and this has been shown since the beginning of this thesis. In this sub-section *a place for recreation and relaxation*, both meaning and definition are once again under scrutiny. The garden as *a place for recreation and relaxation* requires definition as, although some may group the terms ‘relaxation’ and ‘recreation’ together, there are important differences between the two terms.

The variations within terminology from differing countries has already been highlighted in this thesis, and is again referred to in determining an appropriate definition for the terms recreation and relaxation (see definitions below). The exploration of perceptions and opinions of the partaking participants has also revealed some differences in understanding and definition to these two terms. An example discussed earlier within this thesis illustrated the differences in the responses to the scale rating statement that referred to ‘doing’ and ‘work’. To the Australian participants ‘doing’ meant work whereas the English participants don’t see ‘doing’ things in the garden as ‘work’. For the English participants ‘doing’ could encompass a wide variety of actions possibly, some perhaps relating to gardening, such as pruning, pottering about the garden, or more leisure oriented diversions, such as having a picnic. The term ‘work’ to the English participants was a very definite description of labour.

As ‘work’ and ‘doing’ are viewed differently then it is possible that relaxation and recreation have different connotations as well.

Recreation, states the Macquarie Dictionary (2005) is:

>“1. refreshment by means of some pastime, agreeable exercise, or the like. 2. a pastime, diversion, exercise, or other resource affording relaxation and enjoyment.”

and relaxation is described as:

>“1. abatement or relief of bodily or mental effort or application. 2. something affording such relief; a diversion or entertainment”
The Oxford English Dictionary (1989), however, defines these two terms as:  

_Recreation_ – “the action of recreating (oneself or another)…by some pleasant occupation, pastime or amusement” and “a pleasurable exercise or employment”.  

_Relaxation_ – “the action of unbending the mind from severe application; release from ordinary occupations or cares; recreation” and “respite, rest”.

From the definitions from both the English Oxford (1989) and Macquarie (2005) Dictionaries the terms ‘relaxation’ and ‘recreation’ could almost be interchangeable. This is not necessarily the case with reference to the garden and results from this research have shown that the participant responses do differ in understanding, for example, the differences previously outlined as to ‘work’ and ‘doing’.

Differences noted within the approach to relaxation and recreation were shown in the scale rating statements which related to using the garden for recuperative and restful purposes (see Figure 26 below).

![Figure 26](image)

Figure 26. Responses from Australian ○ and English □ participants from the Scale rating statement exercise ‘I go into the garden to recharge’ and ‘I see the garden as a place to rest’.

According to the above scale rating statements, both the English participants and the Australian participants strongly agree that they go into the garden to recharge, however the English participants have a marginally stronger feeling of agreement to this statement. In the following result, number 8 from the chart, shows that Australian participants perceive the garden as a place to rest considerably less than the English
participants. This is supported by the evidence reported and discussed in the previous sections of *a place of activity* and *a place of personal meaning*.

The results, therefore, are not surprising as ‘recreation’ has been determined as meaning ‘activity’ to the Australian participants, and practical and physical activities and actions are viewed as preferred concepts by the Australian participants.

However recreation can be divided into two groups; recreational relaxation and therapeutic relaxation. Recreational relaxation relates to the enjoyment of relaxing in a recreational environment or setting and therapeutic relaxation relates to therapeutic benefits which may be gained from spending time in a garden atmosphere or setting.

Gardens have long been recognised as areas with the ability to provide calmness and quiet (Crozier, 2003; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Relf, 1998), and that can have therapeutic benefits in times of great personal stress and strife. Illness or injury is not a pre-requisite for horticultural therapy (Flagler, 1993) and the benefits that can be obtained from the garden may also be gleaned in a home sense.

Participants confirmed that the garden was a place for relaxing and that spending time in the garden was therapeutic. Results showed this to be a universal concept throughout the lay participant groups with Australian lay participants noting that plants and the garden “allow us to relax...they are an emotional and mental release” and that “the garden has a very calming and satisfying effect on the soul...it gives you a feeling of self worth”. One AL even qualified it with “Relaxation. It’s [a] physically and mentally engaging activity at a pleasurable, unstressed pace”. This feeling was reiterated by another Australian lay participant who said that “gardening helped me through my late husband’s illness” and that “planning from my garden bench was as important as planting at that stage”. Lewis (1996) suggests that possibly “more gardening activity occurs in the imagination than in the confines of a garden plot” and that “gardening is almost as much to be enjoyed in the anticipation as in the actual act” (p. 51).
The feelings of refreshment and restfulness in the garden were explicated by an Australian lay participant as “the green, the blue sky, wind, inner peace, self satisfaction of the creation of my own space”. These restful comments highlight the natural concepts of “the green, the blue sky, wind” and yet still include the practical descriptors of an active association with the garden.

Similarly, an English lay participant also commented on the sensory aspects of the garden, similar to the last made by the lay Australian participants; “the smells, rustle of wind, colour…it seems to calm”. Again, the sensory aspects are used to determine a calm and preferred environment.

One English lay participant noted that they found plants and the garden “very relaxing. If I’ve had a stressful day I just go out into the garden”. This seems to be a common occurrence for all participants, including the participant who commented that “relaxing is the priority in the garden for me”.

Several English professional participants explained the effect that plants and nature have on humans at a deeper level “there’s something deep in our psyche and collective unconscious and where we’ve come from that reminds us of that”. This comment intimates a highly inspired impression of gardens and a sense of enjoyment and happiness.

Another participant remarked that gardening “brings a huge sense of well-being to people who garden”. These comments show a sense of the benefits being more than just an individual benefit, but one that benefits a population. Similarly, another English professional participant expressed “I think there is an extremely strong link between well-being and gardening”. This reinforces the benefits of gardening and health, and also that these benefits are available for all rather than for an individual.

The Australian professional participant’s views on recreation and relaxation included “I never feel better than when I’ve been somewhere where you’re with nature”. Spending
time in green and natural environments, even viewing natural environments, has been shown to be beneficial to humans, both in mental and physical terms (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; 1990; Lewis, 1995).

Another Australian professional participant noted that “just spending time in the garden, being out there. If you’re feeling ‘daggy’, if you’re feeling cross, if you go out there and potter, no matter what you do it calms you”. This calming and settling of internal turmoil was given a deeper implication by another AP who felt that spending time in the garden “allows you to feel the enormity of nature” and “it makes you feel that everything else in life is just trivial...It helps to take away the trauma of what’s going on in the earth”.

These results are supported by the arousal matrices which explored ‘The Garden as an Entity’. The combined professional participants positioned their responses in the upper third of the matrix denoting a positive and pleasurable experience but at a level of mid to high arousal related to the terms ‘inspired’ and ‘reverential’ (see Figure 23).

The combined lay participants, however, also positioned their responses in the mid to high range of pleasant denoting a mid to high level of pleasure, but with a greater cluster within the mid to low arousal level (see Figure 24). This indicates that the combined participants prefer a pleasurable yet low key setting for relaxation, such as was suggested in the quoted by the AL “Relaxation. It’s [a] physically and mentally engaging activity at a pleasurable, unstressed pace”.

In summary, the garden has many faces and can be many ‘places’. It is a place of personal meaning; it can be a place to make and recall memories and experiences; it is a place for activity and fun, and a place for rest and recreation. It can have spiritual qualities, be a place of attraction and it can be a place of perfection, fulfilling our desires for our own piece of ‘paradise’.

The way we use and perceive the garden has been shown through this research to be dependent on our understanding and interaction with it. Our heritage also plays a role in this perception of use. That the garden can show so many ‘faces’ and provide so much
interest and areas for interaction, shows the importance of this concept to humankind. The domestic garden is our most intimate connection with nature and the green world and therefore should be preserved as an important part of human personal growth and development.
Chapter 8

The Glory of Gardening and Gardeners

The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body but the soul.

“Share the botanical bliss of gardeners through the ages, who have cultivated philosophies to apply to their own – and our own – lives:

“Show me your garden and I shall tell you what you are”

Alfred Austin (1835-1913)
Poet Laureate 1896-1913

What is gardening and what makes a gardener?

The terms, gardening and gardener are defined as

“1. the act of cultivating a garden. 2. the work or art of a gardener.”

and a gardener is described as

“1. a person employed to take care of a garden. 2. someone who gardens”

(Macquarie, 2005, p. 584).

And a gardener, states Tim Smit (2001) is one who is also “indulging in a natural process which a lot of people don’t have. When you garden you are actually part of the process of life.”
Gardens mean different things to different people and this has been supported by the findings of a study into the motivations behind gardening (AHC, 1992). The study concluded that the definition of a garden could include:

- An extension of the house
- Additional value for the house
- A sense of pride
- A sanctuary – an escape
- A place to entertain
- A means of working
- A place to restore, realign, recuperate, relax

The analysis of the concept ‘what is gardening and what makes a gardener’ revealed many underlying themes such as; what motivates a gardener in a garden, what constitutes the ‘profile’ of a gardener and the views of gardeners about gardens, plants and the green world, and are in keeping with Dunnett and Qasim’s (2002) findings that gardening and the garden as a place can produce “aesthetic, spiritual and psychological benefits that extend well beyond the simple growing of plants (p. 40). Combined, these aspects illumine and expand the current understanding of gardening and gardeners.

Within this research project, the opinions and perceptions of gardens and gardening were collected from horticultural professionals and lay gardeners from both Australia and England. As people ‘evolve’ into career paths, so to do people with an enjoyment for tending the earth have a tendency to evolve into gardeners.
What is a gardener?
A gardener is one who has immersed themselves in the most intimate people-plant relationship of gardening, says Lewis (1996). Gardeners come in all shapes, sizes, colour, ages, ability levels, financial states and nationalities, and are at the ‘front line’ of nurturing (Kaplan, 1973) and have a responsibility for the future of the Earth and protecting the connectedness which many humans experience with gardening.

The life stages of gardeners
From this research I have determined that there are three dominant stages of ‘gardener’ which are:
- the childhood gardener
- the homemaker gardener
- the retired social gardener

These three categories denote the stages at which people, both participants in this research and interested other parties, have begun being involved in this ‘leisure pursuit’ – a term which often fits ‘uneasily’ with gardeners as they appear to get more ‘pleasure’ than ‘leisure’ from their gardening.

The following figure describes what influenced the participants in this research to become a gardener; whether it was a familial influence, educational influence or the influence of homeownership and homemaking.

Table 11. External influences behind the emergence of gardeners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Relatives</th>
<th>Teachers/School</th>
<th>Homemaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Professional</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Lay</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Professional</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Lay</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The childhood gardener

Children have “a unique and natural affinity with the garden that is beyond explanation” (AHC, 1992). This natural affinity is often absent during adolescence and early adulthood (“I remember weeding the garden at about 8 or 9 years old”), only to reappear as the individual matures (AHC, 1992). This assertion of life stage significance is supported by my results in which most participants’ spoke of gardening at the life stages of childhood or home-maker and young family stage.

Only one participant related having an interest in the activity of gardening in her early teens and this participant has pursued a horticulturally related career:

“I remember sort of fiddling in the garden when I was a small child and as a teenager. I mean…things like planting a rosemary from a cutting, and pinching it out and tying the wisteria onto the pergola my father had build, so I had always been interested”

Approximately half of the participants reported being a gardener from an early age “I believe I used to follow my mother along in the garden and pull the seedlings out as she put them in” and marginally more Australian participants than English participants began gardening from childhood than at the purchase of their first home.

Of these childhood gardeners, many of the participants reported being introduced to gardening, whether consciously or not, by a relative, such as the comment above which appears to relate to many gardeners’ introductions to this ‘pastime’. As with many other customs throughout history and myth, the regular undertaking of a task transfers the knowledge in an unconscious way, and as such following or ‘helping’ parents is the beginning of this transfer of an interest which may last the rest of one’s lifetime.

“I was three or four and went gardening with my Dad. We had a very strong relationship” (AL)

“I began gardening quite early on. Parental influence, I suppose. That and a case of necessity” (EL)

The ‘necessity’ that this English lay participant noted was the employment of his family as farm labourers and the post-war years which influenced many to have their own gardens as a ready supply of fresh vegetables.
Not all childhood gardeners were influenced by both parents, as one participant noted: “my mother was a homemaker, not a gardener”. One Australian professional participant had no parental influence in her childhood but offered her motivation for gardening as:

‘I think it was a love of nurturing things and I’m a scientist. Tilling the soil is, I suppose, my fascination, but my parents certainly didn’t garden. But I find among gardening addicts I’m an exception – most people have grown up with gardening and I haven’t but I have embraced it because I just have a feeling about it. I’ve been lucky’

Table 12. Familial influences behind the emergence of childhood gardeners. Some participants noted more than one influence, e.g. both grandparents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Grandmother</th>
<th>Grandfather</th>
<th>No family influence</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Lay</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 shows the breakdown of the familial influences behind the emergence of childhood gardeners within the participant groups. Mothers featured consistently as an influence but appear to have had little impact on the childhood gardener. This, it could be argued, was due to the home duties occupations of the mothers, as supported by the participant statement “my mother was a homemaker, not a gardener”. It is possible that time constraints by the full-time mother did not allow for quality gardening time, yet Mayne-Wilson (2005, p. 5) states that “women at home were often the one family member who had the time to plant and nurture the garden”.

Fathers and grandmothers appeared to me the most influential in the emergence and development of childhood gardeners. Fathers were not as bound by the social ‘rules’ and regulations of the times relevant during the participant’s childhood and appeared
to have more time to enjoy the home and the outside of the house was seen as predominantly a male maintained domain (Alexander, 2002; Timms, 2006).

Some childhood gardeners did not have parental influence at all and were introduced to the activity of gardening through their school and school teachers. One Australian professional participant recalled often arriving early at school during third class as “we were actually planting a garden at the front of our class room and I remember being very interested and involved in that”.

Another Australian lay participant noted that she “was always interested in gardening but one of my teachers at school was interested and passed it on” and this interest led to a life long career with plants.

**The homemaker gardener**

The participants who nominated a start into gardening at a later stage in life appeared to be influenced by the purchase or acquisition of their first home. Making the home and garden ‘neat and tidy in the eyes of ‘others’ supports Dunnet and Qasims (2000) findings that creating a respectable image of oneself was an important aspect of gardening to the homeowners, and that it precipitated increased personal satisfaction.

In this study, four out of five of the English lay participants were married before taking up gardening as a hobby. One EL told me she had been in her early twenties when she began and that her main motivation was that of home ownership. Another EL said that she had been married for a few years:

“but didn’t understand about gardening until a neighbour invited me to share some bulbs”

The participant explained how she then found the fascination in gardening while ‘experimenting’ with her first acquisition. She not only began a relationship with the garden, but she also began a relationship with her neighbour who introduced the participant to gardening. The fascination experienced by the novice gardener and the type of relationship of novice gardener/experienced gardener is in keeping with Kaplan’s (1973) assertions.
An Australian lay participant shared that she began to garden in 1962 when she was first married but this was mainly to make the home “look nice”, supporting a concept suggested by Dunnett and Qasim (2000) which suggested that gardens, particularly front gardens, project an image of ‘who we are and what we do’ which is assessed by passers-by and other neighbours. She told of her increasing interest as her children grew and then of her self-determined ‘promotion’ to full-time gardener upon her retirement.

The experience of the participant’s entry into gardening through acquiring a home and then deciding to enhance the outdoor areas prompted me to explore the concept of whether gardener’s were born to garden or whether they could learn the skills sufficient to become classed as ‘a gardener’.

In an attempt to explore this question, participants were asked to elect a position on a scale rating statement found within the supporting booklet. Participants were instructed to choose the position which best corresponded with their level of agreement to the statement that “gardeners are born, not bred”.

On the scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 9 (Strongly Agree), the mean result of the English participants was placed at 5.9 with the Australian mean being placed at 6.4. Both the Australian and English participants agree that gardeners are born and not bred, however the level of agreement varies marginally with the English participants being less agreeable to this statement. This marginally lower recorded mean may be in response to the results which showed that the majority of the English lay participants were married and became homemaker’s before commencing their gardening careers.
The results showing the participants responses of agreement that gardeners were born and not bred also support the example of the Australian professional participant who had no familial influence towards gardening other than growing up on a block of land with surrounding trees and shrubs. That this participant then developed such a deep passion towards gardens and plants to make a career of this relationship shows that there must be some innate desire, possibly with differing degrees of passion and depth, within each person.

**The retired social gardener**

One Australian lay participant noted that she became a gardener once she had married in 1962 and had her first home, but she considers herself even more of a gardener since she “became a full-time gardener on retirement”. This group featured strongly within the participant group profile. Their expertise and experience were invaluable within this research and such expertise and experience are often only found in those who have been actively involved in an activity for a long time.

The gardeners who are classed within the ‘retired social’ category may have been gardeners for many years, but their preferences for gardening will have increased since retiring from employment, such as noted by the participant above. Garden clubs, such as the NSW club of the Australian lay participants and the Lincolnshire club of the English lay participants, are social centres for gardeners and allow for the formation of new friendships. This was mentioned by one Australian lay participant who commented on the number of new friends she had made since joining the club. She noted that “once the children grow up, the parents become gardeners. I belong to a garden club and most members are elderly or retired. Gardening becomes a great part of life”.

The enjoyment of gardening was described as a multifaceted concept; it included the joy of working with plants, the participant’s interest in their surrounds and the activities within the garden club agenda. The community and contact experienced between members belonging to the garden club as well as other non-club gardeners, and sometimes even with non-gardeners was deemed to be important by the participants.
An Australian lay participant spoke of her loneliness when her husband entered a nursing home. She said her “gardening filled a big hole in my life” between visits and soon she was joining in on the garden club excursions to view gardens in other areas, and meeting new people, even outside her home. Her husband had placed a garden seat on the nature-strip of their corner block and many walking past would often stop for a chat about her gardening and how the garden was progressing

“It could just be a quick word from some, but others would stop for a few minutes and chat”.

Of all the participant groups, the English professional participants were found to have had the most parental or familial influence (4) and only one beginning after acquiring a home. In comparison, the Australian professional participants had some familial influence (2), some educational influence (1) and two had begun to garden after acquiring their first home.

In the lay participant groups, the Australian participants had 3 instances of familial influence, 1 of educational and two began after acquiring a home. The English lay participants’ results were almost the reverse of the AL results, and showed that the EL group had some familial influence (2), no educational influence (0) and 3 began a garden or gardening after acquiring their home.

**How do gardeners view the garden and plants?**

Gardens occur in many forms and locations across the globe and gardening is a highly popular leisure pursuit. I wanted to gain an insight into how gardeners and those employed in the realms of horticulture viewed the necessity of plants to our human existence and our people-plant connection. The possibility of differences and similarities between Australian and English participants was also explored using the interview questions and the components of the booklet.

All participants see the garden and plants as necessary to our existence (Lewis, 1996):

“having nature around you gives you a sense of peace and I think people who are connected to nature have an earthiness” (AP).
Several participants echoed the statement made by an AP that the relevance of plants to human health and ‘happiness’ “is something that is not being taken seriously!” (AP) and one EP suggested that humans “don’t grasp its full power” and that nature and the green world “shouldn’t be taken for granted”. One AP phrased it eloquently when he stated that plants and the garden:

“give you a sense of peace, a feeling that you belong to the earth... to be a part of nature when it’s thriving – it’s so exciting!”

Other comments by the professional participants included:

‘It’s a sense of wonder, a sense of wonder at how powerful nature is and how amazing life is and I think too much of that is being lost – that sense of wonder. The feeling that you can put a seed in the ground and it becomes a plant and you can eat its produce. It’s just incredible. And I think that’s something that just draws me to it and makes me want to tell people about it’ (AP)

“It’s an escape – it is. It’s a wonderful feeling that you’re nurturing plants and making the place look good” (AP).

One EP even harked back to our earliest human past and modern times when he expressed that

“there is still something very primeval and pleasing about seeing plants grow. It reminds us of our roots and origins, and that nature is still there and still carries on despite the fact that we’ve all got laptops and that dinner comes in a plastic box and goes in the microwave”.

In contrast to the professional participants, the lay participants from both Australia and England spoke of plants as the “source of survival and pleasure” and how plants have sustained and protected us for centuries. One AL participant spoke of the early colonial times in Australia and how “vegetables were so important for survival”. Similarly, another AL stated that “without them [plants] nothing would happen. They are a source of survival and pleasure”. Aesthetic beauty was also mentioned by an AL. She said that a plant’s beauty was very important and believes that “people are like plants. They bloom best where they belong”.

The English lay participants also referred to the survival aspects of plants to humans as “initially for food and existence”. Two EL participants also referred to the use of plants for medicine (“they were originally our medicine and they played a lot [sic] in
our health with learning to extract parts” and “they were our food and medicines”) and to general life quality “leaves are beneficial to the air, so they’re necessary”.

Delving even deeper, another EL participant mentioned the impact the garden has on the interconnected circle of life when she said:

“the role of nature provides food for insects, the birds – the lifecycle, I suppose, in nature”.

Like the Australian lay participants, the English lay participants mentioned the aesthetic qualities of plants and the impact they have on humans when plants “brighten things up and makes them pretty”.

In summary, the professional groups from both Australia and England were predominantly focussed on the wonder and ‘power of plants’ (Lehane, 1977; Hemphill & Hemphill, 1997), an aspect which many who follow earth-based religions are aware of. This power may be seen as scientific wonder to some “The feeling that you can put a seed in the ground and it becomes a plant and you can eat its produce. It’s just incredible” or as a link to our ancient past “It reminds us of our roots and origins, and that nature is still there”.

The lay participants from both Australia and England were, however, more focussed on the survival and immediate benefits of plants and gardens to health and food or, in a few instances, beauteous surroundings.
What is gardening?

Gardening is the most intimate people-plant relationship (Lewis, 1996) involving the physical and nurturing interaction between a person and the soil, which can produce “aesthetic, spiritual, and psychological benefits that extend well beyond the simple growing of plants” (Dunnett & Qasim, 2000, p. 40).

Is it the garden or the activity of gardening which evokes emotion?

In Chapter 7 The Eden Concept, the Australian and English participants were asked to describe how the garden made them feel. As a subsequent yet separate part of the question they were then asked whether it was the garden or the activity of gardening which evoked their nominated feelings for the garden and this is discussed in this subsection. A large proportion of the participants, both Australian and English, professional and lay, nominated that the activity of gardening evoked these feelings towards the gardens.

“I really enjoy the activity of gardening and that makes me feel quite fulfilled spiritually or personally, but I can get a lot of pleasure just walking around gardens so they make me feel relaxed and at peace – often at peace with myself” (AP)

The response by this Australian lay participant has actually included both the concepts of garden (“I can get a lot of pleasure just walking around gardens so they make me feel relaxed and at peace”) and gardening (“I really enjoy the activity of gardening and that makes me feel quite fulfilled spiritually or personally”) within her answer, and this is something which has surfaced before in the responses given by the Australian participants. Whereas I have been attempting to separate and segregate the concepts of gardens and gardening, the Australian participants have a tendency to see them as a single and interchangeable concept, as demonstrated by the above quote.

Another Australian professional participant nominated a similar account:

“The activity of doing it [gardening] and just feeling that nothing else matters. I mean I wouldn’t have a radio on when I’m doing that...I’m just out there
with my plants and with nature and just being fascinated by buds that come on things and fruits and just everything”

Again, there is the overlapping between the concepts of the garden as an entity (“I’m just out there with my plants and with nature and just being fascinated by buds that come on things and fruits and just everything”) and the activity of gardening (“The activity of doing it [gardening] and just feeling that nothing else matters”).

The following two responses from Australian professional participants also contained this interchangeability between the terms ‘garden’ and ‘gardening’ featured in the previous descriptions.

“The activity. Even if I’ve gone out with a cuppa to lave a look around, I’ll inadvertently begin pulling a weed from here and there and that has then escalated into the full scale weeding of that bed, although I’d not planned on doing it at that time. Mind you, if the lure of the garden hadn’t been strong I probably wouldn’t have gone out there for my cuppa” (AP)

The first participant nominates the activity as being important and that going out there “with a cuppa to lave a look around” instigated many opportunities for activity, such as “pulling a weed from here and there and that has then escalated into the full scale weeding of that bed” although it was acknowledged that his hadn’t been planned at the time. The participant does, however, acknowledge the presence and “lure of the garden” as a place and notes that if the “hadn’t been strong I probably wouldn’t have gone out there for my cuppa”.

The second participant spoke of the activity of gardening being the trigger for the emotional feelings but this explanation may give an indication to the confusion between the ‘interchangeable’ terms of gardens and gardening demonstrated by the three previous participants.

“I think the activity is important even though most of the time I can be gardening without realising I’m doing it – it’s just my unconscious ‘absorption’ with my garden and plants. You feel you are aiding the garden to look its best”

This participant nominated that the “activity is important” but then noted that they were sometimes unaware of undertaking activity in the garden, or gardening as the action is commonly described. This is shown in the response “I can be gardening without realising I’m doing it – it’s just my unconscious ‘absorption’ with my garden
and plants”. This overlapping of terminology could be due to a number of possibilities including; a high level of absorption in the task, the concept of “aiding the garden to look its best” does not equal ‘gardening’ in the participant’s mind, or that, similar to the English responses illustrated in the previous chapter, there is an inequality in how the English participants and Australian participants perceive the concepts of ‘doing’, ‘working’, and now perhaps with ‘gardening’.

This disparity demonstrated with this concept of gardens and gardening in this chapter, as well as the demonstrated differences in the last chapter, could be an area for further investigation within future research to determine the understandings and actualities of terminology over two nationalities which share a common language.

This group of Australian professional participant opinions shows a predilection towards the activity of gardening. It could be argued that activity features more prominently in this group because of their professional careers, many of which involve instructing people, both corporate and the public, on the history of plants, how to use plants, and the design of planting within a garden situation. It may indicate a ‘flow-through’ effect from their working lives to their personal lives, as they still see the physical as more important than the actual.

The Australian lay participants also nominated activity as being the dominant concept which evokes meaning for them in the garden, however the concept of the garden as an entity was implied within several responses, such as:

“Both. The biggest pleasure is when things start to blossom. You are reaping the rewards for all your hard labours”

This participant speaks of the labour which has achieved the pleasure which can be appreciated within the garden environment. Another participant said that both the garden itself and the activity were important:

“A bit of both. The garden has taught me patience”

Two participants nominated the activity as being the sole concept for evoking emotions within the garden, and although one lay participant commented that she was sometimes:
“a bit lazy on the activity side of things, but I wouldn't like a garden where someone has to come in and do it for me. I like the feeling I've done it myself. I'm a very practical person in the garden”

The second participant said that “the activity of gardening” was the dominant concept and justified this by adding

“it's good exercise to dig and clip. It's very healthy to garden”.

One participant noted at first that it was purely “the garden” that evoked emotion, but then added

“You can’t have the garden without the activity” (AL)

This was an interesting statement as the reverse also applies - as you can’t have the gardening activity without the garden either. This was an acknowledgement of how some participants viewed the two concepts as interchangeable and indivisible.

The English lay participants also talked about the activity of gardening in several instances as “something to do” and one EL commented that the activity of gardening filled her mind (and her day). Several English lay participants told me that although they plan to just sit in the garden and enjoy it, they are often (unconsciously) drawn into pinching out this, or cutting that back, or tying up that escaped tendril.

‘The activity of gardening, as I’m doing something with the plants I’ve got available. It’s very nice to see it come to fruition but it’s the actual activity that’s attractive’ (EL)

One EL with a most beautiful garden one-acre garden said that it was the garden that evoked most emotion. “If I could afford it I’d have it all done for me” she said laughingly, although “there’s little bits I’d do. I like the planting, so I’d do the planting, but when it comes to weeding or doing the roses, no, give that to someone else”. She added that they’ve been in their garden for 16 years and she hasn’t mowed their lawn once.

An English lay gentleman believed that both the garden and activity of gardening “were interrelated. The activity certainly makes me feel like that, certainly, but the
The belief that both the garden and the activity evoked emotion was popular amongst the English professional participants. It was recognised that the two concepts were separate entities but they went “hand in hand” and were therefore the terms were often used interchangeably.

One EP said that that he felt it was the ‘spirit’ of the garden that made him feel good, but that the honest toil of gardening was satisfying to the soul as well.

Another EP believed that it was ultimately the garden which evoked the feelings as it was central to all you see and feel, and what you do within it as a place. It is, therefore, the ‘controlling influence’, not only to our emotions, but to our actions as well.

This comment was again reiterating the interconnectedness of the garden as an entity and the garden as a place of activity, which was hinted at by several of the Australian participants.

What is very noticeable from this research is that the garden, whether it is regarded as a place or as a place of activity, generates deep emotions within many of the participants.

There was also a surprising result in the scale rating statement exercise for Question 4 (The garden is a practical place). The English group had a mean ranking of 6.6 which was slightly more in agreement with the statement than those of the Australian group at 6.25.

This is unexpected after seeing the result for Question 2 (Gardens are places for ‘doing’ rather than ‘thinking’) which ranks the English group at 5.2, just under the Australians at 5.4 and the result from Question 7 (‘I see the garden as a place to work’) which ranked the English group at 4.4 against the Australian group with a ranking of 6.1.
The result for the statement 2 shows a similar result for both the Australians and English, which is consistent with the results from the interviews when discussing the emotions of gardens or gardening, as many saw the two terms as interchangeable. This overlapping – or rather the interchangeable use of terms – by participants was something that had previously come out in the research. The Australian participants did express, as shown, a marginally stronger agreement that the garden was a place for doing rather than thinking but this would be consistent with the previous discovery of the preference for practicality by Australians, and supports West’s assertion that Australia is a very practically oriented nation (Cains, 2001).

The result for statement 4 shows that both Australian and English participants strongly agreed that the garden is a practical place, with the English participants demonstrating a marginally higher level of agreement. This concurs with the interview data which shows that both Australians and English participants go out into their gardens to do practical tasks.

The result from statement 7 also supports the interview data that shows both Australians and English suggest that activity was important, however, the interviews showed a slightly higher preference by the Australians for activity and this is reflected in this figure. The substantially lower indicator for the English, however,
could be interpreted as a difference of definition perception of the terms ‘practical’ and ‘work’. As shown by the results in *a place of activity* (Chapter 7), the terms have a similarity of meaning but the implications to the participants from the two different countries alters that meaning for them and it was shown that the English participants did not regard practical activity in the garden as ‘work’ and that the term ‘work’ was predominantly regarded as labour, and was therefore rated as less preferable.
**...a process of production**

Participants were asked in several of the research tasks to determine their personal relationship with the garden with regards to the garden being a place for productivity. Productivity appeared to have several meanings within the participant group and the participants generally classed their garden experiences and visitations within two categories to which I have assigned the descriptors *Consumptive Production* and *Maintenance Production*. These terms indicate the primary use of the garden for the participants: consumptive production relates to the all of the tasks and activities associated with growing and harvesting edible produce, such as herbs, fruit and vegetables. Maintenance production refers to all of the tasks associated with ornamental gardening, such as lawn mowing, pruning and other physical jobs.

**Consumptive production**

Participants were shown a picture of a very tidy and organised vegetable garden (picture C) within the photo-elicited emotional response inventory task and were asked to denote how the garden made them feel. A related task for this picture was to rate it from 1 (most preferable) to 8 (least preferable).

Overall, the participants rated the vegetable garden as the third least preferred picture setting. Isolating the participants into their four groups showed that the Australian lay, and both the English professionals and the English lay groups ranked picture C poorly. Conversely, the vegetable garden was ranked third highest by the Australian professional group.

It could be argued that the higher ranking preference demonstrated by the Australian professional participants’ shows an inclination towards the structured survivalist/practical mentality (Cains, 2001) which is linked with our initial contact to gardens and gardening in Australia. A preference for structure and form would be consistent for horticultural professionals as a result of their structured and conforming horticultural training. Symmetry, line and strength of colour and form make this picture striking, as does the lush and ‘edible’ reflection it represents.
The disinterest demonstrated by the English participants is consistent with their lack of desire for vegetable gardens as expressed in their mental creation of their ‘perfect’ garden. The lack of interest by the Australian lay gardeners, however, could possibly indicate an interest in something more than purely practical aspects within the vegetable garden. This is something that could be repeated, possibly using different styles of vegetable gardens and with a larger number of participants to see whether a similar result is obtained.

**Maintenance production**

What I have termed ‘maintenance production’ is the art and tasks associated with the maintenance and furtherance of a garden, such as the practical tasks of pruning, planting, weeding and mowing. These chores are perpetually present within a garden, whether a gardener (or non-gardener) chooses to notice them or not.

> “Pruning, feeding, picking, giving attention to plants – activities arise by being conscious of the situation and then attending to it. The flow of activity is natural and smooth and unstrained, and in that the joy of living comes out”

This verbalization of a gardener’s perceptions of garden tasks illustrates how the ‘flow of activity’ appears to order this gardener’s tasks during her gardening sessions.

One Australian lay enjoyed “propagating plants”, another said “tidying” and that she always had her secateurs with her. An English lay participant spoke about the constant tasks of “deadheading” and “weeding”.

Allowing the garden to dictate what is undertaken during gardening sessions, as this gardener has described, appears to feature in responses from both the Australian and English participant groups, and is consistent with the scale rating statement result which asked participants to mark the position which best corresponded with their level of agreement to the statement that “my gardening sessions are carefully planned” (see Figure 29 below).
6. My gardening sessions are carefully planned

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Figure 29. Responses from Australian and English participants from the Scale rating statement exercise

Interestingly, both the Australian and English participants had almost identical results for this question. They both felt that “it would be nice to be that organised, and to stick to it!” however reality shows that their sessions in the garden were not carefully planned (“I never know what’s going to happen in the garden”) but resulted from an ad hoc approach, determined by what they felt merited their attention by an initial tour through the garden to gather ideas which were then worked on for some time until “something else gets noticed and I drift off to attend to that before I forget”.
What attracts people to gardening?

It was noticeable when asking participants about gardens how the activity of gardening was often discussed and through this research it has become apparent that gardeners often transmute the terms gardens and gardening, and that one becomes the other with ill defined boundaries of either term. This was a factor in deciding to divide the concepts of gardens and gardening into two chapters, however there was a need be aware of this transmutability between terms when analysing the results.

The answer to what attracted people to gardening included many responses, some spiritual, some practical and some were rooted in their family history. Simple explanations included the enjoyment of “seeing the result of my efforts” and “being creative – something you can grow into”. These two comments by lay participants makes mention of the slower and more industrious side of gardening that would seem almost ‘unfashionable’ and unacceptable in the minds of many modern ‘instant gratification’ gardeners, where the trend is for an easy, smart and low maintenance quick fix solution (Evans, 1999) instead of the slow and labour intensive procedures of old.

The creation of new life was important in attracting people to gardening, and another Australian lay participant said she was still amazed “to be able to take a seed or cutting and see it grow to fruition”. This mirrored another participant’s response in which she nominated “the enjoyment of sharing garden plants” and yet another participant who enjoys propagating her plants to give away to others; “it’s a pleasure to pass them on to someone else”. This also hinted at a social aspect of this pastime, which several participants commented on.

‘Once children grow up, the parents become gardeners. I belong to a garden club and most members are elderly or retired. Gardening becomes a great part of life’

This comment hints at a foregone conclusion that all elderly parents will turn to gardening to fill the empty gaps once their children have left home. One English lay participant also felt this was true but expressed it in a blunter manner. He thought gardening was more important “for ladies (perhaps that’s a bit sexist)[sic] to feel they’re producing things if they’re not producing children”.

253
The importance of plants was noted in a different slant, as one Australian lay noted her preference for English gardening shows as:

“they concentrate on more flowers and plants, whereas the Australian shows find five or so plants and that’s their idea of a garden!”

Some participants believed that it was something in an individual’s internal makeup – “something in your inner self; you either like it or you don’t like it” (AL) – or it was related to family “it’s in the genes”. Mayne-Wilson (2005) concurs that the “urge to garden is so ingrained, so ‘hard wired’ within many of us”, although according to one English professional participant “there is no gene for gardening”.

The English lay participants had similar responses to these, and they cited “the love of plants” as being an attraction to gardening.

One unusual response to the question ‘what attracts people to gardening’ came from an English lay participant. The interview was held in his lovely large garden full of colourful shrubs laid out in an ordered and well designed manner.

‘What attracts people to gardening? I can’t imagine! Some people like getting their hands dirty and growing things. I think perhaps more so for ladies (although that’s a bit sexist) to feel they’re producing things if they’re not producing children. It’s quite rewarding for people who like that activity’

This participant doesn’t call himself a proper gardener, but a garden labourer who spends a lot of time in the garden helping his wife, who does lay claim to being a gardener. Although this fellow sounds like he dislikes gardening, he is, in fact, what has been termed as a pragmatic gardener, which according to the AHC (1992) can be divided into the ruthless gardener (one who sees the garden as an extension of the home that needs ‘dealing with’ and uses it for a physical workout) or the maintenance gardener (arranges the garden for minimal maintenance and appreciates that maintaining a nice garden increases property values). It is yet another example of how gardens can be differently defined by different people, and how different personal priorities affect these personal definitions.

Finally, during thematic analysis of the interview transcripts, it became clear that a recurring theme within what attracted people to gardening was that of the garden as a place for personal enhancement. Former non-gardeners were able to learn how to
grow plants, nurturing their gardens as well as their inner selves, and although no real differences were noted among the Australian and English participants, it was still an interesting additional discovery from the research.

Many participants viewed the garden as giving them newer and more varied personal experiences and that their own individual personalities had undergone some kind of alteration within the garden or gardening context.

“Gardening becomes a great part of life”

This Australian participant had been referring to her generalized view of ‘becoming a gardener’ when asked ‘what is it that attracts people to gardening?’ She had been discussing how “once the children grow up they, the parents, become gardeners”. She related how her joining the gardening group had opened up new possibilities and friendships to her and that she finds many elderly people enjoy gardening, and that in fact many of the gardening club she belongs to are either elderly or retired.

“Being creative, something you can grow into... Like painting a picture around your home”

Several of the participants described their discovery of personal insights about themselves which they had discovered within the parameters of gardens and gardening. These insights included skills they had never tested or used before, in fact, one Australian participant told of her new-found love of constructing trellises and the associated tasks of concreting and building which she has found so rewarding and enjoyable. She expressed this to me as

“I build structures...Lots of manual work, which is rewarding to the gardener”

This participant explained that her late husband had always carried out this type of work and his death had seen her “do the work or do without”. She found this type of manual productivity within her garden satisfying and something which allowed her to keep fit in her retirement as the jobs she described were not lightweight tasks. Another Australian participant observed that she had found great personal joy in:

“Propagating plants and then growing them up and giving them away. It’s a pleasure to pass them on to someone else”
This Australian participant had always been a gardener ‘of sorts’ however once her husband had been placed in a nursing home, she told how her gardening habits changed. She enjoyed the camaraderie with other gardeners within the club and those that stopped by her garden while she was in it. About 10 years ago, before her husband’s entry to the nursing home, he had placed a bench on the nature-strip of their corner block, allowing walkers to ‘rest a while’. This bench has produced many more acquaintances for the participant and these mainly began as references to the garden or her gardening. As she described, she has been brought out of her predominantly one-on-one relationship with her husband into an ever increasing circle of acquaintances. This is in keeping with studies which note the increased interaction between citizens who use the garden and gardening as the basis of their ‘acquaintance’ (Kaplan, 1973).

This is another example of the differences in perception of meaning and enjoyment of gardens and gardening, and the enhancement of our personal lives and lifestyles that gardens and gardening can bring. It shows that many different types of people are attracted to gardening for a wide variety of reasons, whether they are for social, educational, or emotional reasons. Gardens can fulfil many desires in humans and this is why their importance needs to be highlighted. Although humans, participants and non-participants alike, sometimes have difficulty in expressing their needs and desires for gardens and gardening, perhaps there is some innate ‘hard wiring’, as Mayne-Wilson (2005) suggests and this hard wiring may be the reason for the continuance of the practice of this pastime which could face extinction should climate and increased housing lessen our options to interact with our most intimate link to nature.
Conclusion

These results have demonstrated that apart from gardens being seen as the ‘ultimate paradise’ they are also the core of our domestic existence. Although not all people have the advantage of gardens nearby, the desire for the existence of gardens is a general phenomenon which attaches itself to our innate emotions. These emotions may be demonstrated in family memories, as suggested by Francis (1995), individual perceptions and personal spiritual beliefs. The garden, and the activity of gardening, confirms our place within the physical world and our place within our domestic ‘world’ of current and generations past.
Chapter 9

Conclusion

“If not ignored, nature will cultivate in the gardener a sense of well-being and peace. The gardener may find deeper meaning in life by paying attention to the parables of the garden. Nature teaches quiet lessons to the gardener who chooses to live within the paradigm of the garden.”

- Norman H Hansen, The Worth of Gardening (year unknown)

Gardens and gardening are often our most intimate connection with the Earth, and for many we can experience this connection as easily as stepping into our own backyard. Gardens and gardening are available to young and old, from fit to frail and from novice to expert. The research highlighted in this thesis has shown that spending time with plants increases our well-being and other studies cited within this thesis has revealed that plants and green nature can shorten post-operative recovery times; these benefits often being used within rehabilitation programmes such as Horticultural Therapy. However, there is a risk that modern attitudes to gardens and gardening could be damaging or ultimately risking the associations and connections that humankind has had with nature, plants and the environment for centuries. This thesis aims to draw attention to the risk of modern ‘disembarkation’ from natures’ protective ark, and highlights the potentially emotive, spiritual and physical benefits of gardening and the power of plants.
Attitudes, behaviour and traditions towards gardens and gardening have been handed down through history to our present gardeners, and much of that knowledge has been passed down through the generations by family. The concept of family is important to society and often shapes peoples perceptions and opinions of all we see and experience in the world. These perceptions, opinions and life skills are learnt at the family knee, and it is important to stress that the introduction for many people to gardens, plants and the greater environment is through family attitude and involvement with the garden and gardening.

Childhood is an important stage for an introduction to gardening as this is when life perceptions and impressions are forged. Children of the twenty-first century are facing more stress in their lives and have less chance to connect with nature as homes are becoming larger while housing blocks are getting smaller, often at the cost of the size and style, and sometimes even the presence, of the garden. Modern lifestyles too are becoming internalized with the advent and proliferation of these McMansion-style ‘monoliths’ which cater for all family activities under the one roof, including reality computer games which let you ‘play’ in a ‘virtual’ backyard, instead of spending real time there (Francis, 1995). With the opportunities for children to experience gardens and gardening being minimized, how are they expected to become familiar with the soil and plants, and the way this interaction can affect our emotions, as they have with humankind for centuries past?

This is supported by O’Leary’s assertion that those who do not have early contact with gardens, gardening or a connection with the Earth, may lack interest or have limited respect for the wonder of nature as portrayed in the form of a garden, and this could ultimately translate into an indifference to the wider environment in general (O’Leary, personal communication, 20 August 2007, Richmond). Without an interest or stake in our heritage, we may steadily lose that embedded sense of responsibility for the environment and that inner sense of responsibility could be reduced to fact and figures, instead of feelings. The risk of a disappearing relationship between people and plants in Australia is great. The research shows that we currently do not appear to connect as
readily or intimately with gardens, and this less-connected generation will therefore possess less ‘green’ knowledge to pass down to their children. If this lessening of connection continues, garden lore, knowledge and skills will become less meaningful, less vital and less relevant with each generation, and the western world may face the risk of the people-plant connection deteriorating and becoming unrecognisable to future generations.

This is not only important in the respect of gardens and gardening, but again to the wider environmental issues facing Australia and the world. The children of today are our policy makers and politicians of tomorrow, and they hold the key to how we and future generations appreciate or even acknowledge the environment.

The children of tomorrow are also the researchers of the future with opportunities to swell the bank of scientific knowledge surrounding plants and explore the centuries-old ‘science’ of plant medicines and their anecdotally curative properties, for which science is increasingly finding a scientific basis to the ‘old-world’ curative claims. Restorative and therapeutic research, also, will continue to transform the human appreciation of nature by highlighting the remarkable physiological and psychological benefits to be gained by interacting with nature and the greater green world.

To ensure that children of the future have the opportunity to partake in these environmental and scientific interactions with plants, it is important that future generations have the benefit of the available knowledge, practices and principles relating to gardens and gardening. Parents and educators need to appreciate the importance of introducing environmental issues at an early age, thereby planting the seed for future awareness and appreciation of gardens, the greater concept of nature and the wider environment. This thesis underscores the importance of gardens and gardening to humankind and highlights both the physiological and psychological benefits in an attempt to increase its profile to current and future-generation participators and policy makers.
This is a particular challenge in Australia since obstacles have plagued Australian gardeners since the time of colonization. Climate and the very different landscape experienced by the new colonial settlers were major obstacles in the colonialised ‘greening’ of this ancient land. The indigenous Australians and their culture were largely ignored and their environment irrevocably damaged: areas of the landscape were razed and ‘recreated’ for the first colonial gardens which utilised the knowledge and plants of their forebears from England. The lack of climatic knowledge about this newly colonialised country was highlighted in the struggle to make the gardens survive. These first colonial gardens were attempted with the converse conditions left behind in England. Australia had poorer soil, less rainfall and so much bushland that the English settlers deemed as needing clearing before the landscape could resemble anything as culturally acceptable as those landscapes found in Mother England.

Australia also has a brighter and harsher natural light which tends to flatten colour. This difference in light became evident through an omission of colour within responses by Australian participants, whereas the English participants repeatedly noted colour in their responses for the same question. This discrepancy to colour presented as a possible area for investigation within the realms of future research to determine the effect of light levels within Australia with regard to our perceptions of plants and nature.

The climatic struggle has followed Australians through the past two hundred and nineteen years and with the worsening climate change predicted, it seems set to continue. Obstacles constantly placed in ones way sets a halting pace for achievement, and this has been demonstrated in the case of Australian gardening. The constant struggle against the environment impacts enormously on how gardeners think, perceive and practice gardening. Climatically, Australia has a hot and dry climate with limited rainfall in some areas. Ideally, planting choices should be appropriate to the climate in which they are to be planted, however this is commonly not the case as, traditionally, the desires of Australian gardeners appear to be firmly embedded in the style of the English garden, with lush foliage, colourful flowers and the history of hundreds of years of culture and connection between people and plants. That these preferences for style and practice
feature so heavily in our gardening ethos, it was hypothesised that these notions have been passed down through the generations from England to Australians with Anglo-Celtic heritage through those first Anglo-Celtic colonial settlers. That gardening practice and preference have been inherited from the Anglo-Celtic English highlights the issue of the possibility of other aspects of English garden and plant culture that may have been inherited. This in turn must emphasize the difficulty in developing a relationship with a new country and an entirely different type of landscape with the impact of these transferred preferences. Was the revered people-plant connection, which history has shown us existed through the Celtic and pagan peoples, passed down into the principles and practices of Anglo-Celtic Australians?

This situation in the lush and verdant landscape of England is less problematic. The traditional and continuous thread through the centuries to the mystery, lore and magic of nature and plants has remained unbroken for the English and this, I believe, manifests itself in their seemingly unconscious depth of engagement with their gardens and nature in general. Some examples of this are seen in the resurgence of interest in nature-related icons, such as green men, and earth-based religions. Within the research, this depth of engagement is manifest within the English participants’ rich and descriptive language of gardens and gardening.

Research from this thesis shows that a thread of English-based knowledge has been passed into the gardening culture of the Australian participants. This is consistent with Ulrich’s assertion that culture “unquestionably has important influences on innumerable aspects of person’s reactions with the physical environment, from constructing homes, to achieving privacy, to developing world views” (1983, p. 107). That continuous and intrinsic thread, however, has seemingly ruptured and broken with the disruption and displacement of citizens to a new land that bears no comparison, on the whole, with the verdant and green land they left behind. This manifests itself in a displacement of attachment and engagement with the garden as the instincts of survival and preservation dominated, and myth, legend and lore were subjugated to ensure this survival. Whether the subjugation of this ‘green’ connection was intended to be a short term consequence
or set aside permanently is unclear, however in the case of the Anglo-Celtic-Australian participants it is clear that this has occurred. Examples of this displacement and detachment, and perhaps ultimate loss of connection to centuries-old lore, is the ever present dominance of practicality within the Australian garden and Australian gardening practices. The single-mindedness of survival would have fostered the necessary detachment to allow the population to survive and thrive.

The English may have gone through similar survival needs in their history, however their more amenable and constant growing conditions would have alleviated the despair felt by the Australians for growing food and crops, and once survival was assured the English were able to turn to more aesthetic landscapes for enjoyment, pleasure and refreshment.

The research has shown that although it appears the Australian participants still revere plants and nature, their depth of reverence and attachment is not as deep, and the comfort felt with nature has become jarred, disjointed and in some respects, uncomfortable. Lore and myth had been abandoned by the colonial settlers and this abandonment has subsequently been passed down through the centuries, much as lore was passed down through Anglo-Celtic generations in England and our modern generations are therefore only working with the inherited knowledge that is available. The comfort of the people plant connection felt by the English participants, however, is demonstrated in their terminology when discussing plants and trees, design and desires. In comparison to the pragmatic and relatively unassuming content of the Australian participants’ dialogue, the English research participants were rich in description and used a depth of analysis which hints at a deep and continuing knowledge and acceptance of the power of plants.

An instance of this is featured in the descriptions given by participants when asked to imagine that the garden was a person and to describe the personality or traits of that ‘person’. Richly descriptive language explored the behaviour, personality, and strengths and provided an insight of great depth and knowledge – characteristics which were often
reminiscent of someone describing a greatly revered, respected and adored friend. The Australian participant responses lacked the depth and vibrancy in their description and the ‘friend’ they described was a pale comparison to the energetic and effervescent personality described by the English participants.

Depth of description was a notable difference between the Australian and English participants. Differences in perception of terms also featured, with several instances of the two cultures hearing the same words but understanding them with a different meaning, as demonstrated by the English participants’ responses which attached different meaning to the words ‘work’ and ‘doing’. Although it has already been noted that differences in linguistic expression among participants may indicate differing qualitative responses, again there remains the possibility that linguistic expressions represent similar phenomenons variable by culture. The disparity highlighted in the terminology was identified as an area which could merit further investigation within future research to determine the understandings and actualities of terminology over two nationalities which share a common language.

Practicality was another recurring theme within the Australian responses. Regardless of the subject being explored, the Australian participants included descriptive terms to illustrate activity, doing, action; words that indicated a practical aspect of the topic under discussion. This issue of practicality, I believe, comes from the practical need for survival since the early days of colonialisation and that the survival instinct was so strong that other emotional aspects in the Australian personality have been forsaken for the sake of survival and continuation of the colonial population. The dominating concern was the production of food for survival and to survive, the colonials need to follow strict guidelines to assure success in their gardening. That structural approach appeared so successful that it has been absorbed into the Australian gardening ethos and Australian character, still reappearing centuries later in our concern for practical issues and preference for practical priorities, even though the immediate need for food for survival has finished. Our survival concerns have now turned to managing the climate and water responsibly.
We live in a world full of modern pressures. Stress levels increase as we repeatedly overstretch personal limits, work hours escalate thereby adding to the stress, and maintaining larger houses further encroach on any personal ‘free’ time. All of these pressures highlight the need for people to take time to de-stress and to keep pressure in perspective. Gardens and gardening do and have always operated on a more personal level and this is exemplified in the relevance and research into people-plant connections as concepts for mental and physical well-being.

Furthermore, the planet itself is demanding that we re-examine our relationship with nature and this is illustrated in the dramatic climatic changes currently affecting the world and making world news with floods, droughts, threats of rising water levels and ever increasing temperatures.

Gardens and gardening as a primary, fundamental lived experience can play a foundational role in the development of an ethos that many could argue is desperately need in the twenty-first century in regards to individual well-being and environmental survival.
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AHC see Australian Horticultural Corporation


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ANL see Australian National Library

AOGS see Australia’s Open Garden Scheme


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267


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BNL see British National Library

BoM see Bureau of Meteorology


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## APPENDICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1</td>
<td>Population of the United Kingdom by Ethnic Group, April 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2</td>
<td>The Information Pack for Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.1 Letter of Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 Plain Language Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.3 Consent Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 3</td>
<td>Supplementary Data Collection Booklet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.1 Photo-Elicitation Emotional Response Inventory Sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2 Image Preference Rating chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.3 Scale Rating Statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.4 Emotions Sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.5 Arousal Matrix for ‘The Garden as a Place for Activity’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.6 Arousal Matrix for ‘The Garden as an Entity’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 4</td>
<td>Tables of Results of Literature Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 5</td>
<td>Average Rankings for Image Preference Rating Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 6</td>
<td>Emotions Sphere Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency of Most Nominated Descriptors in Response to ‘What Does the Garden Mean to You?’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 1
Population of the United Kingdom by Ethnic Group, April 2001

Population of the United Kingdom: by ethnic group, April 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Total Population (Numbers)</th>
<th>Non-White Population (Percentages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>White</strong></td>
<td>54,153,898</td>
<td>92.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mixed</strong></td>
<td>677,117</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indian</strong></td>
<td>1,053,411</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pakistan</strong></td>
<td>747,285</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bangladeshi</strong></td>
<td>283,063</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Asian</strong></td>
<td>247,884</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Asian or Asian British</strong></td>
<td>2,731,423</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black Caribbean</strong></td>
<td>565,876</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black African</strong></td>
<td>485,277</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black Other</strong></td>
<td>97,585</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Black or Black British</strong></td>
<td>1,148,738</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chinese</strong></td>
<td>247,403</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other ethnic groups</strong></td>
<td>230,615</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All minority ethnic population</strong></td>
<td>4,695,296</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All population</strong></td>
<td>58,783,194</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2001

The majority of the UK population in 2001 were White (92 per cent). The remaining 4.6 million (or 7.9 per cent) people belonged to other ethnic groups.

Indians were the largest of these groups, followed by Pakistanis, those of Mixed ethnic backgrounds, Black Caribbeans, Black Africans and Bangladeshis. The remaining minority ethnic groups each accounted for less than 0.5 per cent of the UK population and together accounted for a further 1.4 per cent.

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=455
Appendix 2

Appendix 2  The Information Pack for Participants
2.1  Letter of Introduction
2.2  Plain Language Statement
2.3  Consent Form
Appendix 2.1
Letter of Introduction

Horticulture
University of Western Sydney
Richmond Campus
Locked Bag 1797
South Penrith Distribution Centre NSW 1797
Phone: (02) 4570 XXXX   Fax: (02) 4570 XXXX

Name
Address
Address
Date

Dear Name,

I am a PhD student in Horticulture at the University of Western Sydney, having gained both my initial horticulture degree and Honours (first class) at this university and am now undertaking my PhD here. Horticulture at the University of Western Sydney is the leading horticultural institution in Australia and we are entering a new and exciting phase with sociohorticulture playing an increasing role in the curriculum. My Honours and PhD research projects have been the first in this area and have used qualitative research methodologies rather than the traditional quantitative methods to learn about the emotional side of horticulture.

My thesis involves looking at the connection between people and plants that seems to have been with us since the beginning of time. What is this connection with people and plants, and how does it affect the way we view the garden and the greater environment? The information collected from this research will help answer these questions and increase our understanding of the importance of gardens and gardening to society.

Plants feed our body, minds and souls. Their presence can enrich and energise our inner being and their absence can leave us bare. Passion, jealousy and secrecy have all been symbolised by plants and our English language has blossomed and stemmed from a botanical basis, so that we do not feel “left out on a limb” when life isn’t all “a bed of roses”. Green gods have formed the basis of our beliefs, hopes and fears. Wars have proved no barrier for plants to spread their joy into new lands and currencies have skyrocketed and crashed around them. Fascination overcame fear when early plant hunters braved new frontiers for a unique and undiscovered specimen to include in
enlarging botanical collections. And in this modern era, nature has breathed a passion in many to return to an initial green source, to dig through the tangled jungle of our existence to reveal our roots, to find our botanical beginnings. Why does nature touch our soul? Why do green landscapes have the power to quell our fears and stresses? What is this innate connection we have with these silent species whose life-force, like ours, depends on the sun. What is the power of plants?

To explore this issue I am collecting narrative from a select group of individuals who have either an interest or a career with plants and nature. Some of the specialties include art historians, botanists, garden photographers, human issues researchers, horticultural journalists, landscape designers and garden historians. There are many aspects of many different specialties which will be valuable throughout the exploration of these questions. I intend to collect these narratives through tape-recorded interviews with individuals and I am hoping that I may interview you with regard to your expertise in the area of [expertise].

Interviews are currently scheduled to be conducted from May to August. I anticipate the session to take from 30-60 minutes and to follow a format of some specific questions followed by a chance for some more specialised input. This is intended to be a one-off interview, however I may require further contact if the need to clarify responses is required. Details may be listed on the permission slip enclosed. All personal details constitute confidential material and will be treated with the utmost respect and security.

Strict guidelines have been instituted for this type of research by the University’s Human Research Ethics Committee, and all questions will firstly be approved by this committee, as will the entire process. I therefore request your written permission to be listed as a volunteer who is willing to participant in this narrative collection process. Any information divulged for the purpose of the study will be de-personalised and securely stored (as per ethics guidelines) in a locked cabinet for a period of no less than five (5) years before being destroyed. Written permission will be sought from you should any necessary deviation from this standard arise.

Participants should be aware that they are able to withdraw from this study at any time should the need arise. Volunteers who have any concerns or complaints regarding the study should lodge these with the Manager, Research, Consultancy & Postgraduate Development Unit at the University or by contacting the Chair of Committee members through the Executive Officer by phone (02) 4570 XXXX, fax (02) 4570 XXXX or email (name@uws.edu.au).

Would you please indicate whether you agree or decline to participate in this important and exciting research by signing the attached permission sheet and returning it in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope at your earliest convenience.

Should you require any further information regarding this project, please do not hesitate to contact me as per the details listed above. Clarification and information regarding this project may also be obtained by contacting my principal supervisor at the above address or by email, phone (02) 4570 XXXX or fax (02) 4570 XXXX.
I hope to meet with you shortly and look forward to receiving your response in the very near future.

Yours sincerely,

Suzanne Ermert

Suzanne Ermert BHortSc(Hons)
PhD Research Student
Plain Language Statement for participants in the research project entitled:

THE EDEN CONCEPT: AN EXPLORATION OF PEOPLE-PLANT RELATIONSHIPS TO ILLUMINE THE GARDEN BURIED WITHIN

Information for prospective participants

The research project “The Eden Concept: An Exploration Of People-Plant Relationships To Illumine The Garden Buried Within” to be conducted by PhD candidate Suzanne Ermert has been approved by the UWS Human Research Ethics Committee.

To explore this issue, Ms Ermert will collect narrative from a select group of individuals who have either an interest or a career with plants and nature. Some of the specialties include art historians, botanists, garden photographers, human issues researchers, horticultural journalists, landscape designers and garden historians. Data and narratives will be collected through questionnaires and tape-recorded face-to-face interviews with individuals and experts.

The purpose of this research is to explore the emotional and historical connections between people and plants through the eyes and minds of both expert and lay practitioners to illuminate man’s unique relationship with the plant kingdom. Plants are our source of sustenance and shelter, provide weapons and medicines, act as inspiration for art and poetry, enrich our leisure, underpin our beliefs and spirituality, give us our myths and legends, influence our moods and consciousness, and have shaped the very histories of nations.

Questionnaire data will be analysed for types and depth of emotions experienced when viewing a series of photographs. Tape recorded narratives will be analysed for recurrent themes within these topics as participants discuss their areas of understanding and expertise. It is anticipated that participants will be required for a single interview of around 2 hours duration, but that further contact may be necessary to clarify information gained in the interview. Participants will be asked for their opinions and perceptions to a series of questions, and then will participate in an unstructured narrative to elucidate upon their experiences in their people-plant specialty. Interviews will be scheduled at a time and place convenient to the participant.

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts expected for participants, but participants have the right to withdraw without disfavour at any time from the proceedings by informing the principal researcher, Ms Ermert, in writing by email. Any questions concerning the project entitled “The Eden Concept: An Exploration of People-Plant Relationships to Illumine the Garden Buried Within” may be addressed to the principal researcher, Suzanne Ermert of Horticulture on (+61-2) 4570 XXXX or email.

THE UNIVERSITY REQUIRES ALL PARTICIPANTS ARE INFORMED THAT IF THEY HAVE ANY COMPLAINT CONCERNING THE MANNER IN WHICH THE RESEARCH PROJECT IS CONDUCTED, IT MAY BE GIVEN TO THE RESEARCHER OR IF AN INDEPENDENT PERSON IS PREFERRED, TO THE ETHICS OFFICER, HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE, UWS RESEARCH SERVICES, LOCKED BAG 1797, PENRITH SOUTH DC NSW 1797, AUSTRALIA. PHONE: (+61-2)-9772XXXX, FAX: (+61-2)-9772XXXX. ALL COMPLAINTS WILL BE TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY AND YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED OF THE OUTCOME.
Appendix 2.3
Participant Consent Form

Locked Bag 1797
Penrith South DC NSW 1797 Australia

School of Science, Food and Horticulture

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN NARRATIVE COLLECTION
CONDUCTED BY SUZANNE ERMENT

Please fill in the appropriate response to either give or refuse your permission and then sign, date and return this form in the envelope supplied.

I, …………………………………………….., give my permission to be interviewed as a volunteer participant in the study being conducted by PhD student Suzanne Ermert from the University of Western Sydney (Richmond Campus) into the exploration of people-plant relationships. I have read and accept the plain language statement for participants outlining the project, and understand that complete anonymity of interview material will be maintained and that the source of the material will not be identified in the study. I am aware and agreeable to the interview being tape-recorded, and that at the conclusion of the research the tapes and the information given will be stored securely in a locked facility for a minimum of five (5) years before being securely disposed of.

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time by advising Ms Ermert in writing and that any complaints or concerns can be lodged with the Manager, Research, Consultancy & Postgraduate Development Unit at the University or by contacting the Chair of Committee members through the Executive Officer by telephoning (61 2) 4570 XXXX.

Ms Ermert has explained that the interview should consist of a single meeting but that further clarification may be necessary. I agree to this and list my best contact details in the space below.

OR

I, …………………………………………….., decline permission to be interviewed as part of this research project.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Signed

…………………………………….   ………………………………………
(signature)          (please print name)

Dated: …………………………….

Contact details:
Email address:
Best telephone/fax contact number and times to call:
Appendix 3

Appendix 3 Supplementary Data Collection Booklet
3.1 Photo-Elicitation Emotional Response Inventory Sheets
3.2 Image Preference Rating chart
3.3 Scale Rating Statements
3.4 Emotions Sphere
3.5 Arousal Matrix for ‘The Garden as a Place for Activity’
3.6 Arousal Matrix for ‘The Garden as an Entity’
Appendix 3.1
Photo-Elicitation Emotional Response Inventory Sheets

-ve

+ve

-ve

+ve

Annoyed
Confused
Dissatisfied
Indifferent
Saddened
Uncomfortable
Aroused
Comfortable
Impressed
Inspired
Peaceful
Satisfied
Uplifted
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Alternative Expressions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td><strong>Emotions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Primary</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Annoyed</strong></td>
<td>angry, appalled, badly designed, confronted, poor construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>poorly planned, repulsed, restricted, uncreative, wasted space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confused</strong></td>
<td>bitsy, depressed, disconnected, disjointed, disoriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fragmented, hotch potch isolated, lost, themeless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>uncertain, unfeeling, unplanned, unsure, vulnerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dissatisfied</strong></td>
<td>characterless, cynical, directionless, disjointed, disliking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>emptiness, featureless, no atmosphere, themeless, uncreative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unfeeling, unfulfilled, unplanned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indifferent</strong></td>
<td>apathetic, bland, bored, common, complacent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cynical, detached, disconnected, repetitive, tired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>uncreative, unimpressed, uninspired, weary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saddened</strong></td>
<td>depressed, disappointed, dismayed, displeased, lonely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unhappy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uncomfortable</strong></td>
<td>claustrophobic, dangerous, disoriented, edgy, embarrassed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>enclosed, exposed, intimidated, isolated, lonely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>restricted, shocked, vulnerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aroused</strong></td>
<td>aroused, challenged, curious, enchanted, energised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interested, intrigued, mysterious, passionate, stimulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comfortable</strong></td>
<td>carefree, contained, contented, happy, harmonious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nostalgic, protected, receptive, safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impressed</strong></td>
<td>amazed, astonished, desirous, envious, fascinated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>thrilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspired</strong></td>
<td>adored, aroused, awakened, curious, enthused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>impressed, inspired, interested, intrigued, passionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peaceful</strong></td>
<td>calm, connected, contented, deep feelings, feeling at one with nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>harmonious, introspective, nostalgic, primeval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>relaxed, religious, reverential, ruminative, serene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>spiritual, tranquil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfied</strong></td>
<td>contented, maintained, organised, planned, themed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>well designed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uplifted</strong></td>
<td>appreciative, cheerful, connected, happy, inspired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>joyful, pleased, reverential, spiritual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3.3
Scale Rating Statements

1. **The garden is a spiritual place**
   
   1…………2…………3…………4…………5…………6…………7…………8…………9
   
   Strongly  Neutral  Strongly
   
   Disagree  Agree

2. **Gardens are places for ‘doing’ rather than ‘thinking’**
   
   1…………2…………3…………4…………5…………6…………7…………8…………9
   
   Strongly  Neutral  Strongly
   
   Disagree  Agree

3. **I go into the garden to recharge**
   
   1…………2…………3…………4…………5…………6…………7…………8…………9
   
   Strongly  Neutral  Strongly
   
   Disagree  Agree

4. **The garden is a practical place**
   
   1…………2…………3…………4…………5…………6…………7…………8…………9
   
   Strongly  Neutral  Strongly
   
   Disagree  Agree

5. **Gardeners are born, not bred**
   
   1…………2…………3…………4…………5…………6…………7…………8…………9
   
   Strongly  Neutral  Strongly
   
   Disagree  Agree

6. **My gardening sessions are carefully planned**
   
   1…………2…………3…………4…………5…………6…………7…………8…………9
   
   Strongly  Neutral  Strongly
   
   Disagree  Agree

7. **I see the garden as a place to work**
   
   1…………2…………3…………4…………5…………6…………7…………8…………9
   
   Strongly  Neutral  Strongly
   
   Disagree  Agree

8. **I see the garden as a place to rest**
   
   1…………2…………3…………4…………5…………6…………7…………8…………9
   
   Strongly  Neutral  Strongly
   
   Disagree  Agree
Appendix 3.4
The Emotions Sphere

Please circle one or more of the above words that you feel describes what gardens mean to you.

Do you have a different description which doesn't feature in the list above? Please note down any extra terms.
Appendix 3.5
Arousal Matrix for ‘The Garden as a Place for Activity’

Please draw a circle in the position you feel best describes your answer. You can indicate the range of emotion by the size of circle you draw e.g. a small circle indicates a small liking/small interest.
Appendix 3.6
Arousal Matrix for ‘The Garden as an Entity’

Please draw a circle in the position you feel best describes your answer. You can indicate your range of emotion by the size of circle you draw e.g. a small circle indicates a small liking/small interest.
Appendix 4

Results from the literature analysis
of Australian and English publications

<table>
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<th>635.09+</th>
<th>1993-2003</th>
<th>1993-2003</th>
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<td>Philosoph</td>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>Trade/Prof.</td>
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<td>1961-1992</td>
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<td>1993-2003</td>
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<td>175</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>1052</td>
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Australian publications at the National Library of Australia from 1900-2003 listed under Dewey Decimal number 635.9

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<th>635.09+</th>
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<th>1993-2003</th>
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<td>“How to”</td>
<td>Philosoph</td>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>Trade/Prof.</td>
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<td>1993-2003</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>175</td>
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<td>1993-2003</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>411</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>236</td>
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</table>

Australian publications between 1993 and 2003 listed by the National Library of Australia

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<tr>
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<th>635.09+</th>
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<th>1993-2003</th>
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<td>“How to”</td>
<td>Philosoph</td>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>Trade/Prof.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-2003</td>
<td>1329</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-2003</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>1345</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>47</td>
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British publications between 1993 and 2003 listed by the British National Libraries
Appendix 4
Results from the literature analysis of Australian and English publications

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<tr>
<th>1993-2003</th>
<th>“How to”</th>
<th>Philosoph</th>
<th>Mags</th>
<th>Trade/Prof.</th>
<th>Club/Soc.</th>
<th>Cat’logs</th>
<th>Proceed</th>
<th>Total pubs.</th>
<th>Philosoph %</th>
<th>Prac %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUST.</td>
<td>411 (51.76%)</td>
<td>19 (2.39%)</td>
<td>18 (2.27%)</td>
<td>236 (29.72%)</td>
<td>82 (10.33%)</td>
<td>9 (1.13%)</td>
<td>19 (2.40%)</td>
<td>794</td>
<td>2.39%</td>
<td>51.77%</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRITISH</td>
<td>1345 (85.40%)</td>
<td>108 (6.85%)</td>
<td>26 (1.65%)</td>
<td>47 (2.98%)</td>
<td>44 (2.79%)</td>
<td>5 (0.32%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1575</td>
<td>6.85%</td>
<td>85.40%</td>
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Comparison of combined 635.9 & 635.09+ Australian and British publication results

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<th>Philosoph</th>
<th>Mags</th>
<th>Trade/Prof.</th>
<th>Club/Soc.</th>
<th>Cat’logs</th>
<th>Proceed.</th>
<th>Total pubs.</th>
<th>Philosoph %</th>
<th>Prac %</th>
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<tr>
<td>AUST.</td>
<td>341 (54.56%)</td>
<td>2 (0.32%)</td>
<td>11 (1.76%)</td>
<td>175 (28%)</td>
<td>71 (11.36%)</td>
<td>9 (1.44%)</td>
<td>16 (2.56%)</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
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<td>BRITISH</td>
<td>1329 (90.96%)</td>
<td>18 (1.23%)</td>
<td>22 (1.5%)</td>
<td>43 (2.94%)</td>
<td>44 (3.01%)</td>
<td>5 (0.34%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1461</td>
<td>1.23%</td>
<td>90.96</td>
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Comparison of Australian and British publications listed under Dewey Decimal number 635.9

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<th>635.09+</th>
<th>“How to”</th>
<th>Philosoph</th>
<th>Mags</th>
<th>Trade/Prof.</th>
<th>Club/Soc.</th>
<th>Cat’logs</th>
<th>Proceed.</th>
<th>Total pubs.</th>
<th>Philosoph %</th>
<th>Prac %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUST.</td>
<td>70 (41.42%)</td>
<td>17 (10.06%)</td>
<td>7 (4.14%)</td>
<td>61 (36.09%)</td>
<td>11 (6.51%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (1.77%)</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>10.16</td>
<td>41.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRITISH</td>
<td>16 (14.03%)</td>
<td>90 (78.95%)</td>
<td>4 (3.51%)</td>
<td>4 (3.51%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>78.95</td>
<td>14.03</td>
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Comparison of Australian and British publications listed under Dewey Decimal number 635.09+
## Appendix 5
Average Rankings for Image Preference Rating Results

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<th>Pic Pref #</th>
<th>Av. Pop(^n).</th>
<th>Australian</th>
<th>English</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>Lay</td>
<td>Expert</td>
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<td>3.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<td>3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.18</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
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<td>3.36</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>
Appendix 6

Emotions Sphere Results

Frequency of most nominated descriptors in response to 'what does the garden mean to you?'

Creative Space
Satisfying
Peaceful
Relaxing
Cultivation
Nurturing
Refreshing
Renewing
Productive
Practical
Purposeful
Spiritual
Survival
Unpretentious
Naturalistic
Physical
Structured
Wilderness
Complementary
Controlled
Divine Presence
Organised
Romantic
Status symbol

Number of times descriptors chosen