

# Wild Thing

by

 Sophie's Patch



Rewilding the Backyard....  
for fun, food and family.

I believe that gardens and gardening hold the solution to many of the problems we face, such as the cost-of-living crisis, food insecurity, a lack of affordable nutrient dense food, a lack of social connection and the epidemic of loneliness.

As the average backyard gets smaller and smaller, many people don't know what to do with their small space, let alone how important, and indeed powerful, their choices can be. We are told we should aim for a cooler, greener, wilder backyard, but what does this look like?

My 2025 feature garden **Wild Thing** aims to demonstrate how you can create your own wild place in the suburban jungle. It features things that will attract birds, bees and butterflies to your garden, as well as other garden guardians like microbats and beneficial bugs. Of course, not everyone needs an outdoor bath and shower, however for many it would be present in their dream backyard, and it would attract them outside, to relax and unwind amongst Nature.

Happy gardening, Sophie



A garden for the Royal Agricultural  
& Horticultural Society of SA Inc.

In Australia, traditionally our gardens are seen as a nice, simple, open spaces, with trees and shrubs and some green lawn laid out to fill the area. Functionality included the Hills Hoist clothesline, perhaps a BBQ, woodshed, and maybe a small vegie patch in one corner.

However, as times have changed, people now want more from their gardens than ever before. So how do you make it all work?

This year, Sophie presents **Wild Thing**. A wonderful demonstration of a garden that shows us a different approach with a highly functional, multi-layered garden design. The Horticultural Committee is delighted that Sophie continues to engage and educate, even challenge us all about the possibilities and opportunities that come when we think about our gardens differently.

**Wild Thing** does all of this and more. Enjoy!

All the best from the Horticulture Committee at the Royal Adelaide Show.

  
**ROYAL  
ADELAIDE  
SHOW**



Presented by  
**Drakes**



**Wild Thing** highlights the difference between a healthy 'wild' garden and an unhealthy, sterile, lifeless or 'tame' garden.

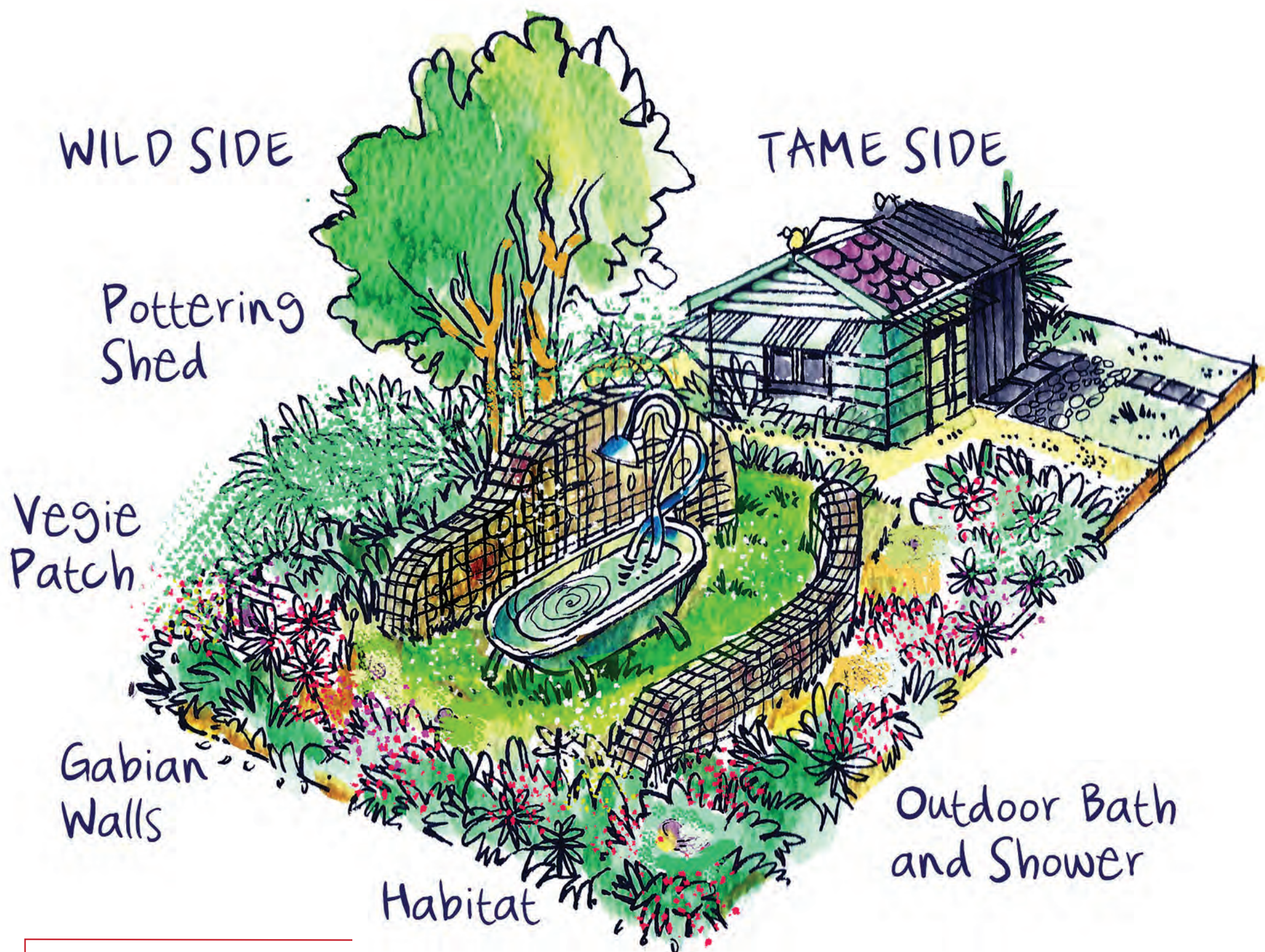
Gardens that are wild are great habitat gardens, home to birds, bees, butterflies and other creatures that live in urban areas including garden guardians like microbats and beneficial bugs. This is done by including food plants and water bowls, nesting boxes for birds, microbats and possums, and native bee hotels. The gabion walls not only look great as a screen or visual barrier, but they also provide habitat for lizards, frogs and other insects. At a time when the biggest threat to urban wildlife is a lack of habitat, every garden, even a small one like this feature garden, can make a difference and become a biodiversity hotspot.

Gardens that are wild are cooler, greener and more liveable. With concern about climate change, the Urban Heat Island effect, unsustainable development, and with heat being the number one natural killer of Australians, making sure your garden is cool and green, will also make it more liveable.

Gardens can still be productive when they are small. At a time when the cost-of-living crisis is hurting many families, growing at least part of your fruits, vegies and herbs will help give people access to fresh, nutrient dense food – the ultimate food security.

Gardens don't have to be perfect, as after all, Nature isn't perfect.

My hope is that we, as a community, choose to create wild gardens, we can cool down and green up, and rewild our cities and towns.



## The Display

The small backyard is comprised of a cute potting shed, a vine covered pergola, an outdoor bath and shower, gabion walls for privacy and habitat, and just for fun, the Chicken Carnevale. It does feature a limited area of lawn to help cool the area down and for kids and pets to play on, however in reality in many backyards today, this is optional due to limited space.

Roughly 1/5 of the display will show the opposite of a 'Wild' Garden, with a typical garden shed, metal fencing, fake lawn and pavers. The dark colouring, exposed metal, dark pavers and plastic grass make the garden hot and inhospitable to life, human or otherwise. People will be able to see these gardens side by side, showing what to do, and what not to do. This combination is stereotypical of many gardens I see as I drive around Adelaide, South Australia and even across Australia for that matter. It is hot, it's harsh, there is no biodiversity and when multiplied across multiple properties, it is making our suburbs, cities and towns less liveable.

### Plant Selection

The plants used in this garden are a mix of Australian natives and local indigenous species and climate compatible exotics which do not have weed potential. There are some mature trees to demonstrate scale and shade. Always check with the knowledgeable gardening personnel at your local nursery or garden centre about the suitability of plants you choose for your garden.



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Wild Thing would not have been possible without the support of the Nursery and Garden Industry of South Australia, and other Sophie's Patch suppliers and supporters.

Wholesale Nurseries include Heyne's Wholesale Nursery, Amazon Plant Growers, Poplar Grove Nursery, Living Colour Nursery, Fengate Nursery and Native Plant Wholesalers.

RTF Rescue lawn from



[theturffarm.com.au](http://theturffarm.com.au)

Ceramic creatures by Wendy Britton Ceramics: [www.facebook.com/WendyBrittonCeramics/](http://www.facebook.com/WendyBrittonCeramics/)

Artwork and ornamentation of the Chicken Carnevale, logo and artist's sketch by George Cooper:  
[www.facebook.com/georgec00per](http://www.facebook.com/georgec00per)

Chickens: Adrian Burgess (poultry expert) 0428 628 144

## Past Show Gardens

Today, I am just as passionate about the topics which I demonstrated in past show gardens. Over the years my Show Gardens have covered topics promoting Nature Play for kids; habitat gardening; 'Buzz' in 2018 showing how to create a bee friendly garden; 'GROW UP' in 2022 was in response to urban infill creating smaller outdoor spaces, showing that we can green up and cool down no matter what the size of space; and 'COOL' in 2023, showed how every garden can make a difference to cool down our homes and gardens, green up our outdoor spaces, create habit for wildlife and help us to grow part of our fruits, veggies and herbs. 'Gardens Connect Us' in 2024 showed that gardens connect us to Gardens Connect Us to nature; to our own personal physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing; to our community; to a cooler, greener wilder and more liveable environment; to food security; and finally that Gardens Connect Us to this earth which grounds us, feeds and supports us... and to the first Nations custodians who came before us, who knew that everything in this garden of Nature is connected.

When you have time, grab yourself a cuppa and check out the photos and explanation about each of them at  
**[sophiespatch.com.au/category/show-gardens/](http://sophiespatch.com.au/category/show-gardens/)**